

Wm. A. Matthews
Pastor

252
G833h

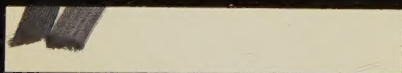
2880

LIBRARY
THE MASTER'S COLLEGE
NEWHALL CALIFORNIA




Ex Libris

This Book the Gift of



The Happy Man



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024



J. P. Greene.

The Happy Man

And Other Chapel Talks

BY

J. P. GREENE

President, William Jewell College

NEW YORK

The Fleming H. Revell Press

1919

LIBRARY
THE MASTER'S COLLEGE
NEWHALL CALIFORNIA

Copyright, 1919, by
J. P. GREENE

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue

THIS BOOK
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
TO
"MY BOYS"

INTRODUCTION

TO appreciate fully these chapel talks of Doctor Greene, one needs to know something of their setting. A few words concerning each element that contributes to the sum total of the meaning of the chapel hour will not be amiss.

To begin with, these "chapel" talks were not delivered in any audience room known specially as the Chapel in William Jewell College. We have never known the luxury of any such accommodation. When Doctor Greene came here twenty-seven years ago, the students and faculty met on the second floor of Jewell Hall in a room that was used also as a museum. When Wornall Hall was built, "chapel" moved into the attic of that building, and when that burned down we moved into the gymnasium. When the new Science Hall was erected, "chapel" moved into one of the large lecture rooms of that building, and doubtless will continue to be held there until funds are obtained sufficient to erect a much-needed improvement.

Nevertheless, it is worth something to recall that these talks were not uttered in some secluded retreat on the Old Hill, but in the rooms dedicated to the varied activities of student life.

The virility of the gymnasium and the honesty of the laboratory and the altitude of the attic are reflected in these straightforward appeals to manhood.

Furthermore, every old student will recall that the chapel services in William Jewell are not restricted exclusively to religious interests. It would not be far from the truth to say that "chapel" is all of William Jewell in thirty minutes. Class yells, college yells, announcements, "pep-producers," songs and cheers fill the air. The fun of college life is given free opportunity, and the rivalry of classes, the *esprit de corps* of athletic teams, the interest in debate and oratory, the patriotism of the student body and the various student enterprises—all are fostered and stimulated during that tumultuous thirty minutes. It will refresh the spirit of many a student to recall the wholesome fun of that half-hour, and to reflect upon the fact that these manly talks did not break in upon such moments as something foreign to healthful and vigorous living. They have in them the force, directness, and sanity that appeal to normal manhood.

There remains one thing more to be said. After all, "chapel" has meant the opportunity of coming into touch with Doctor Greene. For more than a quarter of a century, he has been the heart of William Jewell College. Many of

us recall our first "chapel"—more than a score of years ago, before the years had brought their heavy burdens to our loved president. He was a tender father to his "boys" even in those days, and the years have but served to deepen and to broaden that fatherly solicitude for the well-being of every William Jewell man. He has never been out of sympathy with a young man's struggles in life, and these talks come from a heart whose affection for young men has known no abatement. That is why "chapel" will be remembered longer than the laboratory.

The years have multiplied for our honored president the cares and responsibilities incident to his position, but he has not swerved from his main thesis—that Christian character is *the fundamental thing*. He has his "exceeding great reward" in the lives of his "boys"; lives that have been enriched and ennobled because a truly humble and a truly great servant of God has through the years been steadfast in conviction, loyal in faith, loving in service, and faithful in counsel.

D. J. EVANS.

William Jewell College.

FOREWORD

To "MY BOYS":

CREDIT, or blame, for these Chapel Talks must be given in large measure to Mr. J. E. Bell, my secretary. For the last few years he has persistently urged me to publish them. He wrote the alumni of the college, got the approval of many, and pledges for meeting the expense of the first edition—which is satisfactory, for there is no danger of a second! Then he took down in shorthand a great many of the talks, wrote them out on the typewriter, and laid them on my desk. As I found time I looked over the manuscripts. Some were "impossible," and all of them unsatisfactory. "Proceedings" were halted!

But Mr. Bell was "everlastingly at it." And professors and some of the alumni came to his aid, and requested me to prepare at least twenty-five for publication. I began to look at the matter more seriously. As I found the time I corrected some of the best talks, and entirely re-wrote others. Just as I was becoming interested in the work and had put eight or ten talks in fair shape for publication, war and woe struck the college, and my responsibilities and labors were doubled. I felt "there is no

use." But Mr. Bell came to my help, relieved me in many ways of details in my college work, and always urged me to go on with the Chapel Talks. So, whenever I could find an hour or two, I corrected and re-wrote the talks, till finally, in this month (February, 1919) I finished the twenty-fifth number.

There is method in my madness, in mentioning these things: I want you to regard these talks with filial charity! You will miss some of the subjects you heard me discuss in chapel. But you will run across many of my expressed views, scattered through these twenty-five talks—a different *text*, but the same *sermon*! And I believe that you will recognize in all the talks the old William Jewell spirit. I have worked under difficulties. Probably I could have done better under other conditions. But I have had sympathy. Professors, alumni, students and others, all have encouraged and helped as they were able. Professors Fruit and Edwards of the English Department have assisted in reading and correcting the manuscript. I am thankful to all!

For twenty-seven years I have poured out my mind and my heart to "my boys," in the chapel on the Old Hill. What a holy privilege! You know my ideas of Christian manhood. As the sun is declining and the bright rays of light are slanting heavenward the *real Christian man*

rises in my estimation, the hope of the world and the glory of God!

Thousands of William Jewell men, in all the walks of life, and on the battlefields of freedom, have illustrated and magnified the William Jewell spirit. How I admire them, and honor them, and love them! And my admiration and esteem and love increase with the years!

J. P. GREENE.

William Jewell College
Liberty, Missouri

CONTENTS

Part I

I. THE TWO ROADS	21
II. THE FIRST "No"	27
III. THE SECOND "No"	34
IV. THE THIRD "No"	41
V. THE FORKS OF THE ROAD	49
VI. "YES"	57
VII. "LIKE A TREE"	64
VIII. "LIKE THE CHAFF"	71
IX. THERE IS A DIFFERENCE	79
X. THE LORD KNOWS	88

Part II

I. CONSCIENCE	99
II. MORAL COURAGE	109
III. THE BLACK SHEEP	119
IV. STABILIZING THE SOUL	128
V. THE FOOL COLUMN	136
VI. COMPENSATIONS	141
VII. THE NEEDLE'S EYE	152
VIII. CONSOLATIONS OF EGOTISM	162
IX. THE ARMY BEHIND THE ARMY	171
X. CONCATENATIONS	180
XI. SOLILOQUIZING	189
XII. THE CALL OF MATTHEW	198
XIII. "IS NOT THIS THE CARPENTER?"	208
XIV. "FOR MAN"	218
XV. "WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?"	228

PART I



The First Psalm

Blessed is the man
that walketh not in
the counsel of the
wicked,
Nor standeth in the
way of sinners,
Nor sitteth in the
seat of scoffers:
But his delight is
in the law of Je-
hovah;
And on his law
doth he meditate
day and night.
And he shall be
like a tree planted
by the streams of
water,
That bringeth
forth its fruit in
its season,

Whose leaf also
doth not wither,
And whatsoever
he doeth shall
prosper.
The wicked are
not so,
But are like chaff
which the wind
driveth away.
Therefore the wick-
ed shall not stand
in the judgment,
Nor sinners in the
congregation of
the righteous.
For Jehovah know-
eth the way of the
righteous;
But the way of the
wicked shall perish.

THE HAPPY MAN

For twenty-six years I have read and commented on the First Psalm at the opening of the college session. It is the young man's Psalm of Life, a real song—true, practical, beautiful. Thousands of William Jewell men have heard me read it, and have listened attentively to my imperfect comments on its valuable teachings. I thank them for their respectful attention and sincerely hope that most of them, if not all, know the psalm by heart.

Out of this psalm came the college motto, "Trust in God and Work"—the heart of the song, and as true as truth can be. All over the world are Jewells who love this motto and are trying to follow it.

The first ten talks are based on the teachings of this psalm. I believe that you will pardon me for reproducing, as far as I can, some of my remarks made from year to year. And may I not entreat you to try harder than ever to translate the teachings of the song into all the affairs of your daily life!

J. P. G.

I

THE TWO ROADS

WHAT is happiness? It is not the same as pleasure. Pleasure denotes a passing agreeable sensation or emotion—it may be animal, or intellectual, or spiritual. Joy is a livelier, higher feeling of pleasure or happiness. It is too intense to last long. Happiness is a state, or condition of the soul, lasting contentment, inspired by faith and hope and love. Bliss is intense happiness, and usually expresses the everlasting and undisturbed joy of heaven.

Pleasure is the surface of the sea, sometimes calm and peaceful, sometimes wild and tumultuous, tossed hither and thither by the stormy wind; happiness is the depths of the ocean, undisturbed by surface movements, restful and abiding. Paul and Silas had been terribly beaten, thrust into a dungeon, and their feet made fast in the stocks; but their souls were happy, and their happiness burst forth in songs of joy! On the surface was a raging storm; down in the depths was sweet tranquillity. They had done their duty and were happy.

The psalmist does not define the word, happiness. He describes a happy man. An actual ac-

quaintance with a righteous man, knowing him intimately and seeing him in action day by day, is the best definition of happiness. "Seeing is believing." "Ye are a letter of Christ..... written not with ink but with the spirit of the living God.....known and read of all men." A picture is hung up before our eyes—or rather a moving picture is thrown upon the screen. We see what the righteous man refuses to do, and what he does; what he delights in; how he prospers; how God watches over him along the journey of life; and, finally, how he passes the last, great test and enters "the congregation of the righteous." Righteousness and happiness are inseparable companions.

Several years ago I saw a picture of Mark Twain, seated alone on the deck of a vessel, reading the Bible. In Mark's handwriting were these words, below the picture:

"Be good and you will be lonesome."

Evidently he was giving a humorous turn to the old saying, "He who is good is happy." Men cannot laugh this saying out of the world. It is eternally true. God says it is true and human experience corroborates His word. The righteous man is the happy man!

There are two roads, and only two. You take your choice. Every man travels one or the other. One is the way of righteousness, the other is the way of wickedness. Happy is the

man who walks in the righteous way. "The wicked are not so." They imagine that they are happy, and may appear to be so, may be even hilarious; but they are having only "a pleasant time." Sin has its pleasures, which are for a season. But it has no happiness. Righteousness can never bring regret, either in this world or in the world to come. But sin is sure to bring sorrow and, unrepented of, it must bring remorse. No one can rejoice for long over his wicked deeds, certainly not forever.

Some persons seem to think that happiness is an arbitrary gift of God, bestowed upon His favorites irrespective of their manner of living. This is a sad mistake. It is indeed the gift of God. All our blessings come from Him. And it may be truly said that no one is worthy of His blessings. The righteous man is happy, but not boastful. He knows that God's blessings are scattered along "the way of holiness." He does not expect God to bless him in wrong-doing, but prays God to bless him in keeping him from doing wrong. Neither does he expect to escape tribulation. But he intends to do right even in tribulation, and he believes that God will give him sustaining grace. Righteousness does not purchase immunity from trouble, neither is it a price paid for happiness. It is simply right. The righteous man is in harmony with God, and therefore is triumphant. God is his unfailing

Friend. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?... Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him That loved us."

Look the other way: God has no animosity towards the wicked. They may be, as it were, unpredestinated, but He has not predestinated them to temporal and eternal sorrow. Indeed He feels kindly towards them, would rather they would turn and live. How many blessings He bestows upon them! The goodness of God should lead them to repentance. It is simply this: *They are in the wrong road*. Men do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles. They cannot. Figs do not grow on thistles, or grapes on thorns. Happiness cannot be found in the way of wickedness. It never was found there and never will be. Sin may and does yield a few transitory pleasures, but in the very nature of the case, it cannot produce happiness. It is wrong! There is no present happiness in a wicked life, and, of course, it cannot end in eternal happiness. How can the wrong road ever end right? Wrong means "crooked," right means "straight." A road cannot be both crooked and straight. The only hope of happiness for the wicked is in getting off the wrong road on to the right one. And the longer they

travel the wrong road the less hope of repentance.

There are two delusions:

One is this: The wicked road is no doubt wrong but in some way (nobody knows how) it will end right. The good God will find a way out! His way is to persuade us to get on the road of righteousness. This is the only way of escape. "*Turn ye, turn ye!*"

The other delusion is this: "The way of righteousness is a hard road to travel. Will it pay to keep on through toil and tribulation? After all, the wicked seem to get along about as well as the righteous. Does God really care?" Be not weary in well doing! We shall reap if we faint not. Be not deceived. "For whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." Wheat does not turn into tares, nor do tares turn into wheat. There is a difference! The two roads are not the same. It makes a great difference which road you travel—for time and for eternity. Do we not know that the wicked cannot be happy? Do we not know also that the righteous cannot be miserable?

Then away with the delusions! Do right. This is all that is necessary. We need not think about happiness. We do not have to choose it. It comes of itself, if we do right. It will never come, if we do wrong. Let us give our thought and energy to traveling the road of righteous-

ness. All is well with the righteous. But if it could be otherwise, it would be better to be right and miserable, than wrong and happy!

II

THE FIRST "NO"

"Blessed is the man that walketh *not* in the counsel of the wicked."

IF you will travel the road of righteousness you must learn to say "No!" Negation is the first step. "No" does not seem to be so important as "Yes." But in practice it really comes first. Wrong gets up early for business. Temptation seeks to give us a wrong start.

Take the average college student: He has been brought up in a good home. His parents have watched over his moral and spiritual life. They have endeavored to shield him from sin and to teach him good habits. Good training has kept him practically innocent. But innocence is not virtue. Virtue is *strength*, strength to resist wrong and to do right. Will he be able to hold on his way, to maintain his innocence? This remains to be seen. He will be tempted. Trials will come. A Christian college is the best place on earth for him to be tried out. It is the safest place between home and the wide, wide world. Here he finds a great many strong, clean fellows who will brother him and help him to fight for his innocence. But life in college is

very different from the home-life. Here he must choose for himself, and must largely depend on his own judgment. Father and mother are not at hand, with their wise advice and their loving authority. He is neither strong nor worldly-wise. Sin wears many forms. The devil knows how to appear as an angel of light. In his inexperience a boy will probably nibble at every bait that is dangled before him. Freedom from home restraint delights him and gives him a sort of reckless feeling. He has hitherto been guided more by custom and authority than by principle. It is not at all certain what he will do when sin approaches him from a new angle. Heretofore he has been asked to do the right, and it was easy for him to say "Yes." But now he may be asked to do wrong. Will he *see* that it is wrong? And if he sees it, or is afraid of it, will he be able to say "No"? Now he is "up against it." A holier-than-thou attitude towards his fellow-students will not protect him, neither will it help him to be suspicious of them. But compliance will undo him! He must use both his head and his heart—stand erect, look his fellows squarely in the face, decide between right and wrong according to his standards, and then, if the matter seems to be wrong, or improper, or doubtful, he must say "No." The start he makes depends on the stand he takes.

I take it for granted that you have been walking in the way of righteousness. But you did not choose this road. Your father and mother chose it for you, and you have walked between them, hand in hand, irresponsible and happy. Many a time you would have left the road to chase butterflies or to gather flowers; or tumbled off it into the ditch, if they had not held your hand. Now you are independent, alone, and must use your own judgment. When you feel inclined to leave the road, you must use your eyes and your mind, pause, and ask yourself, "Is this inclination wise and good?" If it is wrong according to your best judgment, you must say "No."

The "counsel of the wicked" means wicked counsel, suggestion or advice to do wrong.

Wickedness is "not backward about coming forward." The knowledge of evil travels further and faster than the knowledge of good. It is active and obtrusive, even impudent. Your sweet innocence will not abash its brazen audacity. Indeed you make "a shining mark," what the devil would call "a lovely victim." You have not learned to say "No." You hardly know the difference between the negative and the affirmative.

The suggestions of the wicked are nearly always before us. They are very subtle, at first not shocking, but rather decent appearing, even

innocent looking. Wickedness creates an atmosphere. We breathe it till the poison gets into our blood. At first we notice the difference, but soon get used to it and learn to like it. Germs are very small, and invisible. If we could see them with the naked eye, we would run away from them. Some of the modern chaps make fun of "atmosphere." Their names are on the devil's payroll. He is a great enemy of ventilation. Fresh, pure air sets him wild. His satanic majesty also abominates publicity.

Just stand around and look at a bunch of the wrong kind of fellows. You may not be in ear-shot of them, may not catch a word of their conversation. But you are breathing their "atmosphere." They have an irresponsible air,—easy, smart, reckless fellows, ready for a dash in any direction. Do you want to be like them? Probably you will catch yourself imitating their looks and gestures.

But now you catch some of their words. "What did that fellow say? Oh, it was a 'funny' remark about some woman! And that new 'cuss'-word he used? Isn't that brilliant!" Would you allow any man to make such a remark about your mother or sister? Did you ever hear your father utter an indecent or profane word? You are getting some more "atmosphere." Why do you stand there and breathe it? You do not endorse such language

but you have not yet learned to say "No," to refuse to listen to it.

Now the bunch have observed you standing there and at a glance they have sized you up. After a few low words among themselves, all of them walk up to you, ask your name and introduce themselves. They ask where you are from, where you are classified, where you are rooming, all in an easy, charming manner. After a few more pleasant remarks they pass on, saying that they hope you and they will become good friends.

Now, what are you going to do? You know pretty well what will happen when you get acquainted with them. You have had enough of their counsel through suggestion. Will you join their company where you will get their "word of advice," and come under the potent spell of their immediate example?

You are standing at the forks of the road. The future depends largely on your ability to say "No," *just now*. If you can say "No" in your heart and have the willpower to abide by it, you will keep your innocence—you will make a long stride towards virtue, strength.

I am sure you know what you ought to do: Avoid these fellows. Over yonder is another bunch. They have greeted you already, several times, with a clean and friendly frankness. Step over there now and greet them. Ask about

the Y. M. C. A. meetings, the student prayer-meeting, the Sunday school and Bible study. Watch their faces light up with interest. Talk with them about athletics and all the forms of college recreation. Not an oath do you hear, not a vile remark about man or woman. This "atmosphere" tastes like that of home, pure and sweet.

As you go to your class or to your room, think of your experiences. Make up your mind to be polite to that "fast bunch," but resolve that you will not come under the spell of their counsels, nor walk in their way. No, *no*, no! Repeat it often and with increasing emphasis. Think of your mother's prayers. Repeat this verse, "Blessed is the man that walketh *not* in the counsel of the wicked."

Remember, no real gentleman uses profane language. And the man that makes vile remarks about women has already fallen into deep depravity. He is not a fit companion for you. You can not afford to come under his influence. There is no clearer index to a man's character than his estimate of womanhood. Here's to our women: mother, sister, sweetheart, wife! We will pour out our blood for them! Give a polite cut and a wide berth to the fellow that flings mud at them! No! You cannot and will not come under the influence of the wicked.

During my first year at college I used the library of the best physician in the town. He was a brilliant man. Being a warm friend of my father's, he offered me the use of his books. Nearly every day I spent an hour or two in his library. Unfortunately he was a hard drinker. The first day I was in his library he offered me a drink of whisky. I was not a Christian, and I had no special antipathy towards intoxicants. But I knew the whisky could do me no good, so I said "No." The next day he offered it to me again, and insisted. But I said "No" again. The next day he came in for his drink and held up the glass to me. Again I said "No." I can still recollect how feeble the first "No" was. The next time it came out stronger. And the third time I made it very positive. Each time it was easier to say "No." If he had not ceased to offer me the whisky I would have refused to use his books.

Say "No" to the counsels of the wicked. Say it again. Keep on saying it! It will come out stronger each time. Finally it will explode, and roar like one of the big guns firing its two-thousand pound shell, to the confusion and destruction of the enemy! "Resist the devil and he will flee from you!"

III

THE SECOND "NO"

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, *nor standeth in the way of sinners.*"

IT would be unnecessary to utter the second "No," if one would say the first "No" and make it positive and final. Refusal to follow the counsels of the wicked, their suggestions and advice, keeps one out of the way of sinners.

But some cannot say the first "No." The counsels of the wicked are deceptive, often charming to the inexperienced and thoughtless. Without pausing to scrutinize wicked counsels, innocent souls take them at their apparent value and slavishly follow them.

Wicked counsels gradually undermine principles, old and familiar truths begin to look different. Sacred things become less sacred. Old-fashioned virtues appear musty and out-of-date. The wicked have no respect for these virtues, and they are so smart and care-free! How can things be serious when they esteem them so lightly? And these people are "prominent," often leaders in business and society.

Once a young preacher sent for me, asked me to come immediately; he was in deep trouble.

I hastened to his home. After I had greeted him, I asked him what was the matter. He said, "I have almost lost my faith, and feel that I must give up the ministry. Very few of the smart and successful men I have met in the city are Christians. I can see that they have a great contempt for my faith and my calling. If the smartest and most influential people have no respect for Christ, how can I maintain my faith? And what is the use? I have not changed any of them but they have greatly influenced me. I tell you the best public opinion is against Jesus Christ." I said to him, "You ought not to go to the enemies of a man to get his real standing. These men may be experts in business, but their opinion certainly is not authority in morals and religion. Paul said, 'Not many great, not many noble.' Such people do not take to the gospel. They are really opposed to it because it condemns their principles and practices. Religion is a personal matter. You know what is good. Righteousness and wickedness are as far apart as the poles. There is a difference. Each one makes his own choice. You must decide moral questions for yourself. And your faith is a matter between you and God. Joshua told the people to choose for themselves, but declared that he intended to serve God. Others, least of all ungodly men, have no right to choose for you. Following Jesus is a simple, plain, busi-

ness, and you know that it is right. You must overcome the counsels of the wicked. 'This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.' Give that up and you are defeated!'

These men cared very little for anything except money. Association with them had gradually impressed the young man with the supreme importance of money, and at the same time had obscured his vision of eternal things. His loss of faith had seemed to come all at once, as a great shock, but in reality it had come gradually. He had walked for sometime in the counsels of the wicked, reluctantly at first, then sympathetically, till he was ready to stand in the way of sinners. An emphatic "No" when he first began to breathe their "atmosphere" would have saved him from that hour of trouble.

We get used to all kinds of things, good and bad, right and wrong. It is a mistake to suppose that we are immune, above and beyond the opinions and counsels of our associates. Walking in the counsels of the wicked is a dangerous thing, "playing with fire"—smoking a pipe in a powder mill. No man can escape the influence of his companions, unless his soul is fortified with strong faith in God. Christ associated with publicans and sinners, in order to influence them to good, not because He liked their company. And Paul became all things to all men that he might by all means save some. But it

was he that said, "Be not deceived: evil companionships corrupt good morals."

Of course, no one expects, when he begins to walk in the counsels of the wicked, that he will ever take his stand in the way of sinners. Who ever took his first drink with the conviction that he would become a drunkard? But if a man will not take the first drink, he certainly will not fill a drunkard's grave. Walking in the counsels of the wicked is progress, going somewhere. Where? No use to say that you hope you will not fetch up in trouble. You will! The first thing you know you will find yourself in the way of sinners, among those that are actually committing sin, transgressing against God and man. The way of sinners is not a hill road; it is a low-lying, broad road, without sign-boards or signals. One walking along with the wicked is in the way of sinners before he notices any difference in his surroundings.

Unhappy soul! What shall he do now? He knows what he ought to have done at first. And he knows what he must do now. But knowing our duty and doing it are two different things. He is ashamed to show that he is afraid to go on. Shame is peculiar. It seems to be both a virtue and a vice. One can be ashamed of indecency and wrong. But one must be innocent to have this kind of shame. Alas! when one is

wrong one can be ashamed to do right. Such shame is a vice.

The man that has gotten into "the way of sinners" has companions. He has to reckon with these. What will they think, or say? They will certainly ridicule his fears. Being wicked at heart, they are not afraid of sin. Indeed they are bold in doing wrong. And facing their ridicule requires more courage than facing a gatling gun. Physical courage is fine. But moral courage is splendid, and so few have it. Conscience always speaks, but does not always speak out loud. The conscience of the moral coward whispers softly on the inside of him.

Have you ever gotten in with a bad bunch, and gone along with them till you have fallen into sin? Did you find it easy to break away and beat your way back to the road of righteousness? It is much easier to say the first "No" than it is to say the second. It is easier to keep out of the road of sinners than it is to get out of it. But a courageous soul can break away. And he must! He need not expect that time or miracle will save him. There is only one way—to break away and go back. Let him ask of God and He will give the courage to say "No."

Years ago a student got in with the wrong bunch and did wrong. I was surprised and grieved. We talked it over. I asked him how

on earth he ever got his consent to do such a thing. The tears ran down his cheeks. He did not know. It just happened. Of course he would not charge his sin on his companions. Then I told him how to get out—cut loose from the bunch! But he could not. He said that I did not understand. But I insisted that I did understand, that I knew his only way of escape. "Break away! Look those fellows in the eyes, and tell them you are out of it! You must say 'No.' You ought to have said it long ago. You must say it now or go to the bad!" He fought a great moral battle and won the victory. Are you in with the wrong bunch? Getting out is no easy job.

It is a dreadful thing to walk in the counsels of the wicked. Would that every one might be able to say the first "No." But it is worse to go on and stand in the way of sinners. This means forming sinful habits. Committing one sin does not make a habit. But often repeating a sin does form a habit. "Repetition is the soul of learning." It certainly is the way to form sinful habits. "Repeat a thing seven times and you have it"—rather, it has you! A while ago a certain sin horrified you. Then you became familiar with it and it did not seem so repulsive. Finally you found pleasure in it. Habit! Remember Pope's words:

“Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.”

Can a habit be broken? Yes! A physical coward is called “yellow.” A moral coward should be called “black.” The man of physical courage is called a hero. The man of moral courage—well, he is not usually “called” at all, lives “unhonored and unsung.” But he is really glorious! Thousands have had the moral courage to utter the second “No.” Innocent and inexperienced they fell under the spell of wicked counsels, and got into the way of sinners. But they were able, by the help of God, to say the decisive “No,” and got out, and are now on “the highway of holiness,” marching on with songs of glory to everlasting happiness!

IV

THE THIRD "NO"

"Blessed is the man" that does not sit "in the seat of scoffers."

THIS is the last stage of the journey. One begins with the counsel of the wicked; and then, if he does not say "No," goes on till he finds himself in the way of sinners; and then, if he does not say "No," he goes on down and takes his seat among the scoffers. Scoffing is the last resort of sinners. When one has "gone all the gaits" he sits down and makes light of the whole matter of morals and religion.

Notice the progression: walks, stands, sits; wicked, sinners, scoffers; begins with wrong counsels, goes on to wrong deeds, ends with scoffing—will not say "No"! The first "No" is the easiest, the second is very difficult to say, the third is almost impossible. What a long distance between the first stage and the last! But it does not take very long to make the journey. The road is down-hill all the way, and one can make time. Evolution is said to be a slow process; devolution is rapid. Innocence, the product of years of careful and prayerful training, may be lost in a moment.

When an innocent fellow is tempted to walk in the counsels of the wicked he does not think for a moment that he will ever take his seat among the scornful. He will never make that long, dismal journey. "I'll just try it a while and see how it goes!" If he could only realize that he is changing his standard, his rule of action—departing from his principles! When his principles are gone it becomes easy to commit sin, to do wrong. And when he gets used to doing wrong, it becomes easy to ridicule *right*, to sneer at the sacred and divine. Breaking away from a virtue really means adopting its opposite vice.

Here he is, where he thought he could never be, among the scoffers, occupying an easy chair. He is no longer *going*, he is there. After all it does not seem so bad. Indeed he feels quite comfortable. And the company is agreeable—"a bunch of good fellows." He "guesses" that he is all right. At any rate it is not so bad as father and mother think it is. They do not know it all. "The boys" say that parents are "back numbers." He smiles as he remembers their quotations from the Bible. "That queer old book, written thousands of years ago, for a superstitious age. *Educated people* no longer accept its teachings. Modern theologians have picked it to pieces. True, they are trying to gather the pieces and make a *new Bible*. But

nobody takes them seriously. What does the world care? Who needs a Bible? Many church members, and preachers too, are hypocrites. They do not believe the Bible—and certainly they do not live up to its teachings! What's the use! Go on with the dance! Let us eat and drink and be merry! There is no God! He is a bugaboo, invented by priests, to scare women and children. Man is the product of evolution. The fittest survives. Might is right!"

The scoffer is like poor, cowardly Pilate. "What is truth!" He knew. He himself said, "I find no fault in Him!" Then why did he not protect Him, snatch Him from the frothing mouths of those wild beasts in human form? He was a coward. He did not have the moral courage to face those scoffers who were thirsting for the blood of the innocent, pure Jesus. They yelled him down and he yielded to their lawless demands. Just then he had a glorious opportunity to stand up and say "No." But the scoffers threw a terrific barrage in front of him and he was afraid to "go over the top."

The seats of the scoffers are "the seats of the mighty." Many sit down among them, but few ever get up and go away from them. It is hard to beat one's way back to the former, blessed state of freedom. "Narrow is the gate, and straitened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it." It is not impossible

because all things are possible with God, and He helps—His grace is sufficient!

Are you sitting with the scoffers? See if you can get up. You will probably find that your legs won't work, or that you are glued to your seat. It is no use to tell you to "sit tight." What you need is to be "jarred loose." You walked with the wicked a while, then you stood a long time with the sinners, and now, at the end of the journey, you are sitting comfortably with the scoffers. There is nothing to look forward to. You are at the *end* now. If you look backward the way is steep and narrow and rough. If you could only stagger to your feet and hurl a loud, defiant "No" at that company of scoffers, rush out of the infamous den, and begin the ascent, trusting in Christ, you would succeed!

Sometimes a young fellow finds himself among the scoffers, not sitting at ease with them. His position among them is due to accident, or circumstances over which he had no control. What shall he do? Get out at once! The "atmosphere" of scoffers is very enervating—it saps moral stamina. Innocence withers in the air of ridicule, unless the soul puts in motion a current of opposition. Let him say "No"!

Years ago a student in a technical school, a mere boy, came to me for advice. The principal of the school was in the habit of ridiculing the Bible, prayer, conversion, etc., in his "chapel"

talks. Many of the boys were in sympathy with his scoffing. What should a Christian boy do? I advised him to protest in open meeting. The principal was a "smart Aleck," vulgar and ungentlemanly. The next time he ridiculed the Bible the boy rose in his place and asked the privilege of saying a word. Condescendingly the principal granted him the privilege. "I wish to protest against your ridicule of the Christian religion. Every evening my father reads a chapter in the Bible, and we all kneel while he prays. We go to Sunday school and preaching service every Sunday, and prayer meeting every Wednesday evening. This is the kind of home I live in. Many of these boys live in the same kind of homes. I am paying my tuition here to gain a knowledge of the technical sciences—not to hear the Bible ridiculed. Your scoffing is not only disagreeable but very painful. It seems to me that you take the advantage of us, you are trying to rob us of our faith and to impose your unbelief upon us." The principal was not man enough to apologize, but he quit his scoffing.

Usually a few positive "No's" will rout the scoffers. But when they are numerous they are very bold—like wolves; one wolf is timid, but a pack are bold and dangerous. Scoffers love to go in packs. Very few good men have the courage to defy a pack of them. Some feel uncom-

fortable in their company, and resolve to get out, but seek to escape in indirect ways. When they raise a feeble protest, a howl from the pack silences them, and they subside for a while. They have not the moral courage to take a bold stand—prefer to wait for an opportunity to *desert*, praying for a chance to get away some dark night! This is not the best way to solve moral difficulties. One bold stroke will do more good than a thousand pious subterfuges.

Nicodemus furnishes a fine example of moral maneuvering. He was a good man. But the circumstance of birth, or wealth, or social environment put him in bad company, among scoffers, a large and fierce pack of them. Their principles were repulsive to him, and their society uncongenial. But how to get out? Inflexible moral courage would have answered the question, but he did not have it.

We first hear of his coming to Jesus by night. Why not at noon-day? The way of righteousness is a bright, shining path. Jesus had no secrets. He walked and worked in the day-light. Sometimes he spent the night in prayer, but never in scheming. Nicodemus was used to dark and dubious ways. His scoffing associates loved darkness rather than light. So it seemed to him that night was the best time for him to meet Jesus.

The next time we hear of him he stood up in that crowd of scoffers, "being one of them," and offered a few feeble words in defense of Jesus: "Doth our law judge a man, except it first hear from himself, and know what he doeth?" Of course not! But one howl laid him low. "Art thou of Galilee?" He sank back in his "seat." Why did he not fight it out with them, then and there!

He probably attended the mock-trial of our Lord, the most painful and degrading exhibition of injustice the world ever knew. If he was there, he said nothing. That was the dark hour, the midnight of the scoffers. All of them were there, the whole pack, and they had their way.

The next time we hear of Nicodemus was after the tragedy—he helped Joseph to bury the body of the crucified Messiah, for whose justification he had refused to stand. He brought a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes, and they took the body of Jesus down from the cross, bound it in linen cloths, with the spices, and laid it away in the garden tomb. O Nicodemus, it was hard for you to be a man! We are glad you finally got out of that horrible company of scoffers. But spices for the dead are not so good as loyalty to the living! If you had just said "No" at the start, you could have gotten far on the road of faith and righteousness. You played the coward, and you lost precious time.

But you just could not say "No." You desired to, but could not get the moral courage. We understand! We spread the mantle of charity over your weakness. It is mighty hard to get out of the seat of the scornful!

V

THE FORKS OF THE ROAD

THE NEGATIVE MAN

IF you would be happy you must not sit down at the forks of the road and remain there. Saying "No" to the counsels of the wicked, and the way of sinners, and the seat of the scornful is absolutely necessary; and learning to say "No" is usually the first lesson of the independent and active life. Without a strong negation of unbelief and immorality one can scarcely choose the road of righteousness, and certainly one cannot persist in traveling that road.

You have scrutinized the wrong road. You have observed that it is broad and easy, gently inclining down hill. And you have "sized up" the people, the great throng, traveling that road. After mature deliberation you have said positively, "I'm not going that road, I will not journey with those people." Splendid! But have you scrutinized the road of righteousness? Look at it closely. It is narrow, uphill, difficult, not traveled by many people, and these seem to be toiling, though determined and cheerful.

Will it pay to take this narrow road? The promise for happiness in this way does not seem very bright. You have chosen *not* to travel the wrong road, but have you the courage to choose the right road? Here is the halting-place of many timid souls, and the scene of many a moral tragedy.

At the forks of the road! Many people are encamped here. They do not seem disposed to take the right road and move onward and upward. I wonder why? I imagine that each one soliloquizes about as follows: "I am determined that I will not travel the wrong road. It promises fleeting pleasures, but no happiness, and it ends in sorrow and remorse. No! But the other road of righteousness? That is a hard road to travel! I'm afraid to try it! Can I endure? There must be happiness in it. It is right, and the best people travel it and they enjoy it more and more. But could *I* be happy in it? Could I bear the toil, make the sacrifices, and endure the suffering? Why not rest right here? I am not in the wrong road, and my sympathies are all with righteousness—my *heart* is right! This is a comfortable place, a sort of neutral ground, quiet and restful, no danger, no struggle! Let well enough alone. The forks of the road for *me*—for awhile, at any rate!"

Halting at the forks of the road will not bring happiness. The negative man is a poor excuse.

“He that is not for me is against me.” Neutrality is a delusion and a snare. You came to college an innocent fellow, with no bad habits. But you must either lose your innocence or maintain it through positive, righteous living. If it is not transformed into virtue, strength, it will surely vanish. You *will* not go *wrong*! So far, so good. But *will* you go *right*? There is no such thing as neutrality in morals. Refusal to stand for the right is equivalent to endorsing the wrong. One must go on in righteousness to avoid falling into wickedness. Screw up your courage to travel the right road. Do not camp at the forks of the road, and do not stand there long. Indecision will cripple your will power, and when that is weakened you will drift into the broad road.

Thousands of people, in every age, have tried to be neutral, but none has ever succeeded. Look at the forks of the road now and behold the crowd of deluded, cowardly souls. The wicked ridicule them and the righteous pity them. They are neither hot nor cold. Just Laodiceans! God says to the Laodicean, “I know thy *works*, (not thy position) that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would that thou were cold or hot! So because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth!” This is what God thinks of the fellow that stops at the forks of the road. He need not expect

men to think well of him. He is a negative quantity. In the war of Israel against the Canaanites the town of Meroz refused to help. Deborah cursed it: "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof: because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

In religion and morals neutrality is criminal. Besides, it is impossible. Every man that refuses to do right weakens the cause of righteousness and thus strengthens the cause of wrong. The inhabitants of Meroz felt secure in their position, perhaps on an out-of-the-way mountain, and were perfectly indifferent about their brethren. But their refusal to help their own people strengthened the Canaanites. Hence they were *not neutral*. Neither can you be neutral. Do not pause long at the forks of the road. Choose the right road, and *go on!*

In political affairs we should form an opinion and stand by it. What is right and best for all the people? Never mind about expediency, or the success of "the party." Parties are good when they represent principles, not power or greed. But patriotism is better than party. A citizen must be a patriot, first and last and all the time. If the party leaders become mere politicians, looking out for power and spoils, desert them and the party. And if the opposite party

has the same spirit, fight both of them! Do not stand at the forks of the road and look on and smile! Our country will never get on and maintain our liberty unless the citizens are intelligent and patriotic, and courageous enough to take sides against the wrong and with the right. Many of our citizens have gone into the hole and pulled the hole in after them, as is seen from the fact that only forty or fifty per cent. of them vote. They should be routed from the forks of the road, compelled to vote or lose their citizenship. And the worst of it is that the non-voters, as a rule, are intelligent and prosperous men. Our cities could easily be "cleaned up" if all the good citizens would vote right.

The reformation of social and business life is a moral problem. All good citizens should help to solve it. Neutrality is sinful. Slavery used to be a great moral problem. It ought to have been settled without a war. The drink problem is a moral one. Thirty years ago most of our citizens tried to remain neutral on this subject. Anyone, after a moment's thought, must see that the saloon is an unmitigated evil, a corrupting and degrading power, unsupported by a single reasonable argument. Wicked, cruel, selfish men desire to make money out of it at the expense of weak men and their families. Why did good men hesitate to oppose this evil? Well, they had business ties, and the "sumptuary

laws'' bugbear blinded them and they tried to be neutral—stood at the forks of the road!

There are no doubt enough good people in every large city of our land to drive out the vicious class. But these good people go on about their own business and let about a thousand political grafters and thugs run the affairs of the city. When these campers at the forks of the road wake up and "go in" for righteousness in city government, things of the right sort will happen. It is a shame for a good man to withhold his influence from a righteous cause!

In *religion* many people imagine that they are neutral, and some seem to think that neutrality is religion. Look at the church members camping at the forks of the road! Years ago they "made a *profession* of religion," joined the church and sat down in stolid indifference and steadfast inactivity. You cannot move them with a crowbar! They attend church occasionally, give a little money when urgently importuned, and remain indifferent to the progress of the kingdom of God. Have they not "professed"? Have they not subscribed to the creed of the church? So they expect to be saved *when they die!*

There are many good moral people outside of the churches, "old hoppers," they used to be called. So far as we can see they live very good lives. They have never fallen into vicious

habits, and they will not give their active influence to any immoral cause. And when they are asked to help in some good public enterprise or charitable work, they do so. They have said "No" to all downright wickedness. Good, so far! We must admire them for what they are not, and to some extent for what they are. Their great sin is "the sin of omission," and it is bad enough.

These people have a *hope*. They have attended to their own business, have never opposed religion but have always spoken of it with respect, have lived reasonably pure lives, have been charitable, and hope to be saved *when they die!*

Is this really the religion of Christ? He came to *save* His people *from* their sins! He takes us from the miry clay and sets our feet upon the rock, and establishes our going. Salvation is movement, onward and upward. It is positive, not merely negative. The Christian has enlisted in the army of the Lord. He intends to serve. He is not a "standpatter" but a "progressive"—negative and affirmative. He will not travel the wrong road, but will travel the right road. James, speaking of the Christian life, puts the positive side first: "Pure religion and undefiled before our God and Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." And

really doing right is a preventive of doing wrong. But in the beginning it is negation and then affirmation. "Moses refused to be called the son of Pharoah's daughter, choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God."

The negative man has never had a place among the heroes of the world. It is impossible to glorify a zero. We are warring for the right against the wrong. The "no" must be positive, but there must also be an emphatic "yes." When the Lord comes to make up His jewels, He will not seek them among those at the forks of the road, but far up yonder in the narrow way, among those that are toiling and striving to do His righteous will.

VI

“YES”

“But his delight is in the law of the Lord,
And in His law doth he meditate day and night.”

HE rejects the counsel of the wicked, he refuses to stand in the way of sinners, and he will not take a seat among the scornful. On the other hand, he delights in the law of the Lord. He finds the sweetest and deepest satisfaction in knowing and doing the will of God. So eager is he to know God's law that he meditates on it, thinks about it, studies it, day and night. To him it is a delightful subject. And he is equally pleased in trying to do what God has commanded.

“The law of the Lord” doubtless includes the ceremonial law given through Moses. The man that delights in doing God's will delights in all His commandments; he does not pick out the easy ones, those that specially please him, nor does he despise the least as unworthy of his notice. But the word “law” is comprehensive—it includes the moral law, what a prophet called “the law of truth.” Another prophet said, “He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly,

and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" A certain lawyer was perplexed about the commandments, small and great, and asked Jesus, "Which is the great commandment?" The answer was, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." And Jesus added, "A second like unto it is this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Then He said, "On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets."

We know from the context that the psalmist had in mind the moral law—right and wrong. He said the wicked and the sinner and the scornful could not be happy. The first step towards happiness is the renunciation of wrong, and the next step is cheerful obedience to "the law of the Lord"—right. He was drawing a contrast between the wicked life and the righteous life. The whole psalm is a warning against wickedness, the sure road to failure, misery, and destruction; and a justification of righteousness, the sure road to success, happiness, and eternal salvation. It is a signboard at the forks of the road. In large letters and plain words, each road is designated and minutely described, and its destination unmistakably declared. This is done that each traveler may make an intelligent choice, that he may know exactly where he is going and what he shall find at the end of the journey. Every one that reads the sign can un-

derstand the directions, and know his destination.

You understand. You have made a choice—the road of righteousness. You did not pause long at the forks of the road, just long enough to make up your mind that you would not travel the wrong road and that you would travel the right road. Standing there a moment, you read the sign, and determined what you would do. Your soul said, “Yes; I will travel the road of righteousness!”

This is your deliberate and determined choice. Knowing enough of the facts about each road you settle on the one you will take. There are inducements for you to travel the wrong road, but after considering these you refuse to take it. And the road of righteousness undoubtedly is difficult. Anyone that travels it must toil and sacrifice, and probably suffer tribulations and persecutions. You have counted the cost. But taken all in all, it is far better than the other road. It offers more happiness in this life, and eternal joy in the world to come. But best of all and most important, it is right. This is the chief consideration with you, “Sir, I would rather be right than be president.” Blessed is the man that has the word *right* engraved in large letters on his heart!

One of the sublimest passages in the Old Testament is this, the words of the great leader and

soldier, Joshua: "Now therefore fear Jehovah, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve ye Jehovah. And if it seem evil unto you to serve Jehovah, choose ye this day whom ye will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah!"

This was Joshua's last public appearance, so far as we know. He was an old man. Many years ago he had assumed, under God's direction, the leadership of the nation, in place of Moses. God said to him at that time, "Be strong and of good courage, to observe to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or the left, that thou mayest have good success whithersoever thou goest." "Be not affrighted, neither be thou dismayed!" He had kept these injunctions and had fulfilled his mission. It seemed to him that the people, in their prosperity, were drifting away from God, some to the ancient customs of their fathers, and some to the gods of the Amorites. So he called the nation together, to make an appeal to their loyalty to Jehovah, and to declare his own steadfast purpose. This was his final "Yes."

Notice that he called upon the people to put away the gods which their fathers served beyond the River—a “sacred” but cursed inheritance! Then he insisted that they should choose, and he did not ask them to choose God’s way without careful consideration—“if it seem evil unto you to serve Jehovah.” But “choose ye this day whom ye will serve.” He demanded that they should make a positive and final choice. No “milk and cider” business! Then he added, “But as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah.” He contemplated the disaffection of the whole nation. What if all his people should choose to serve the gods which their fathers served beyond the River! He had made up his mind. “As for me,” no matter what you decide to do, “I will serve Jehovah.”

This decisive stand is the crowning glory of Joshua’s most glorious life. He was one of the greatest soldiers of all times. He had fought many battles, had subdued the Canaanitish nations, and settled his people in the Promised Land. But many heroes in arms have been moral cowards. Joshua closed his renowned career with one of the greatest moral victories recorded in history. He said “Yes” in clear, loud, ringing tones, unmistakable, magnificent! Glorious old champion of righteousness! It would be hard to find the like of him in our day.

You and I must learn to say "Yes" as Joshua did. No grand-stand plays, please. Let us keep our eyes off the gallery. It makes no difference what others do, whether they take the right road or the wrong one. And never mind what "the fathers" did. If they were right, all right. If they were wrong, "beyond the River," we do not have to follow evil traditions. We have to do right according to our light. We have to choose for ourselves. The "Yes" must be our very own!

Temporizing in morals is most contemptible, "neither fish nor fowl." What is the matter? Why can't we come out with a strong "Yes"? A feeble, indistinct "Yes" is almost as bad as "No." Are we afraid of the face of man? "If God be for us who can be against us?" Are we afraid that it is a vain thing to serve God—doing right will not pay? We have His promise. Is the right road hard to travel? Yes, in some respects. But we knew that when we started. We decided to take it because it is right, not because it is easy. And we had in mind its destination, it ends right. "We shall reap if we faint not." "Let us not be weary in well doing." It does not hurt us to get tired, and discouragement will not hurt us unless we quit. After all, have we not had a pretty good time? I protest that righteous living brings the highest kind of happiness, "a lot of fun," and it is

never disgusting. The pleasures of sin end in headaches—and heart-aches. Besides we could not travel the wrong road. In that way and in that crowd we should be like a fish out of water. I assure you that there is no real happiness in sin. We have just got to do right, no matter what it costs! If we find that we are wrong, we can quit, and we ought to! But we cannot quit so long as we know we are right. Forever and forever committed to this righteous way! Our “Yes” is final and eternal! We knew that we were right when we chose this road, and we know now that we are right. So help us God, we will not be “quitters.”

“The man who once most wisely said,

‘Be sure you’re right, then go ahead,’

Might well have added this, to wit:

‘Be sure you’re wrong before you quit.’ ”

VII

“LIKE A TREE”

THE righteous man is “like a tree planted by the streams of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also doth not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.” A beautiful and strong figure, depicting ceaseless growth and productivity. If a righteous man is “like a tree,” such a tree, his lot is a fortunate and happy one. It must “pay” to live a righteous life. Evidently the psalmist did not believe “it is vain to serve God.” The question never entered his mind, “What profit is it that we have kept His charge?” Happy is the man who makes choice of the right road and “sticks to it” to the end! Undoubtedly he chooses “the better part,” for time and for eternity. He never can regret his choice!

He is “like a tree planted by the streams of water,”—in a garden by the riverside, or in an orchard through which irrigating ditches run, always full of water. “Everything shall live whithersoever the river cometh.” The tree by the river has the advantage of the tree out on the arid plain. It was *planted*, and in the right

place. The gardener planted it in wisdom, where its roots could be nourished by the water of an ever-flowing river. It is a tame tree, not a wild one that grew up by chance where it was dependent on the periodic rains. Rain or shine the tree by the river grows, and bears fruit “in its season.” Its leaf also does not wither when the long dry spell comes, but remains green and fresh, and the fruit grows uninterruptedly unto maturity.

The righteous man is like a *fruit* tree. All trees are beautiful and more or less useful. Live in a treeless country a while, then visit a land of trees, forests and orchards, and feel the charm, the spell of the trees! We never tire of them. In spring and summer and autumn we admire them, and even in winter their bare arms stretched up to heaven soften and beautify the landscape. “No tree in all the grove but has its charms.” But the fruit tree is the most beautiful of all. Its foliage seems a little greener and fresher, its bloom is delightful, and its fruit is glorious. When God made the first garden, to show man how to turn this world into an Eden, he planted it by a river,—“a river went out of Eden to water the garden.” “And out of the ground made Jehovah God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food.” “The tree of life was also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and

evil." A garden wisely planned and located with "every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food!"

Fruit trees must have intelligent care, else they will not bring forth their fruit in their season. Several years ago I visited a fine fruit farm in Arkansas. The peach orchard was well cared for, and the trees were loaded with luscious fruit. The owner told me a story: The man who set out the orchard was a fruit "crank." He set out a fine orchard of excellent varieties. But he had the fancy that he could grow better fruit by "going back to nature." So he set out another orchard of the same kind of trees in a wooded pasture. We went over there to see what unaided nature could do. There among the forest trees were about a hundred peach trees, struggling for life. Only a few of them were bearing. It was a pathetic sight. The trees were slender and tall, wild looking, ugly, not at all like those in the orchard. And the fruit? There was nothing but skin and stone—no meat. It was their season, but they could not bring forth fruit. They were planted in the wrong place, and unpruned and uncultivated. The righteous man is like a fruit tree, *planted* by the all-wise God, in His garden by the riverside, and cared for by the Gardener. Some wild fruit trees bear fruit. But it would be foolish for man to depend on wild fruit—his

supply would be very limited. What is natural for the forest tree is unnatural for the fruit tree; it is man's friend, and demands a place in his garden! There, under his kind treatment, it will flourish and bring forth abundant fruit in its season. Hot and cold, wet and dry, year in and year out, “in its season,” it brings forth its fruit and gladdens the hearts of men.

So, you see, it is not any kind of tree, nor a fruit tree anywhere, but a fruit tree in a garden by the riverside. The righteous man is like this tree. He is not “a happy accident,” but “the sure thing.” God planted him in this favorable spot, and takes care of him and makes him productive—useful and happy. Never will his leaf wither! Never will his season pass without fruit! “Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.” Righteousness must prosper. It strikes its roots deep down into the soil where there is an unfailing supply of water. Fruit in season, not out of season, is divinely ensured as well as promised. “The river of God is full of water,” that river beside which he is planted.

I wish to insist on this great truth: Righteousness does profit! So many men do not believe it, and many more have doubts about it. I want every William Jewell man to believe it with all his heart and to act on it always. Do not go out of these walls with a diploma only; go out with faith in the righteous God. Believe

that an honest man, a *good man*, is the noblest work of God, and that God is with him. Never doubt for a moment that "Godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come." An old Baptist martyr of the sixteenth century had this motto which he often repeated:

"The truth is immortal!"

So it is, and so is righteousness.

I admit that righteous people often have to suffer. The wicked do not think well of them, and sometimes mistreat them. This is perplexing to their righteous souls. No doubt many righteous people in Belgium and other oppressed lands wonder why God has permitted their cruel enemies to treat them so unmercifully. Far be it from me to try to explain God's providence. But we know that our Saviour suffered great pain and shame, and died a violent death. And He said to us, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." But the fact that the righteous do suffer does not invalidate the psalmist's statement. The suffering righteous man is, after all, better off than his wicked oppressor. He has the consciousness of having done right, a very sweet consolation. It is heroic to suffer for the right. All good men sympathize with him. And there can be no doubt that God is interested in every tear and in every groan! The end is not yet. "Vengeance is mine,

I will repay, saith the Lord!” Let us avoid supposing that God’s vengeance will be according to our measure. It will be His, and it will be sufficient. And justification is His also. He will justify righteousness. His people shall come forth from the fiery furnace. The solution of all our doubts and fears will come in the end. I know it is hard to see the blessed end when one has to look through blinding tears. Only wait! “Wait patiently for Him!”

Our college motto is, “Trust in God and Work.” *Faith and ability, a fine combination!* It will win. On the whole the righteous man is better off, all along the journey of life, than the wicked man. For, be assured, the wicked have their troubles, and more are going to come. Their voyage is not all plain sailing. If you were in their place, you would be much worse off than you would be suffering for righteousness’ sake. Wicked sufferers are hopeless. They look backward with regret and forward with despair. But you never can regret that you deliberately chose the righteous life and you have the assurance that the end will justify your choice. He never has quite forsaken you and He never will! This conviction is engraved on your heart. Floods of woe cannot wash it out. The fires of persecution cannot consume it. “If God be for us, who can be against us?”

Pick out the best man you know,—honest, truthful, industrious, prudent, economical, temperate, humble, kind, generous, godly. Is he not fairly successful and useful and happy? Indeed he is “like a tree planted by the streams of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also doth not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall (and does) prosper!”

VIII

“LIKE THE CHAFF”

WHEN this thoughtful man looked at the righteous, he said, “The righteous are like a tree planted by the streams of water, always bearing fruit in its season.” When he looked at the wicked, he said, “The wicked are like the chaff which the wind driveth away!” He thought in graphic language. In his day both figures were easily understood by practically all the people. Every one had seen the fruit tree in the garden and “the chaff of the summer threshing-floors.” In the summer nearly every hill-top was a threshing-floor. One could look in almost any direction, on a windy day, and see a farmer standing by a pile of wheat and chaff, tossing the mixture into the air, the wheat falling to the ground and the chaff flying away before the wind.

Chaff is light, worthless stuff, and harmful when mixed with the wheat. The farmer cannot use it—not even for “war bread.” And so long as it is mixed with the wheat it renders the wheat useless—it cannot be ground and made into bread. The winnowing process is necessary. Then the wheat goes into the granary,

and the chaff is driven away to destruction. The wicked are like the chaff!

Let us get a clear idea of the psalmist's meaning: His mind is on the wicked, the sinners, and the scoffers—the unrighteous man. The immoral, the godless, the transgressors are the ones that are like the chaff. He is not thinking particularly of ceremonies, *forms* of religion. Of course he observed the ceremonial law. It came from God. But he also knew that the man that ascends the hill of Jehovah and stands in His holy place must have clean hands and a pure heart—"who hath not lifted up his soul unto falsehood, and hath not sworn deceitfully." From time immemorial men have thought to substitute ceremonial observances for righteous living. Idolators have depended almost wholly on forms, long prayers, prayer wheels, pilgrimages to holy places, gifts, signs, etc., hoping thus to commend themselves to their gods. Professed Christians are also much given to this delusion. Church membership and Christian ordinances are regarded as instruments of salvation. All God-given forms are merely reminders, aids to devotion, to encourage and help us in righteous living. A little knowledge of the Bible and a very moderate use of common sense should convince us that God will be contented with nothing less than a strenuous effort on our part *to do right*. He looks at the heart and the

life; if these are wrong, we are wrong, and no outward religious form can make us right. He numbers us with the wicked, and there is where we really belong. And all the wicked, no matter who they are,—king and peasant, rich and poor, learned and ignorant,—are “like the chaff.”

Individuals and nations have deceived themselves—have imagined themselves to be the special favorites of God. The individual considers himself one of “the elect,” and the nation, “God’s chosen people.” God does choose individuals and nations for special work. But when they become conceited and presumptuous and unrighteous, He rejects them. He did not choose the Jews because they were better than other people. Moses warned them against this fallacious notion. God chose them as the depositaries of His word, to preserve the knowledge of God for the world. Their real mission was to bring the knowledge of the true God to the Gentiles. But they fancied that they were a people of peculiar worth—the favorites of God. They despised the Gentiles whom they were chosen to serve—called them “dogs.” Why could they not see that God’s sun shines on all, that He loves the world! How could they forget the warnings of God’s prophets, that He would surely reject them if they forsook His righteous law! In their presumption they did depart from His Word, and fell into idolatry

and sin. And He scattered them among the nations. He treated them as He treated the wicked Gentiles. All the wicked look alike to God. He is no respecter of persons. Christ told the Jews that God had done with them. They had served His righteous purpose—the Messiah had come! So He took the kingdom away from them. It is a vile slander for a wicked individual or nation to claim to be “God’s elect.” “There is no difference,” except *in character*. Even now, with the records of the past before our eyes, people will persist in this delusion. The Jews still think that they are God’s chosen people, and the Germans are boasting that they are His “elect.” *Kultur* would usurp the place of Judaism. And a great many good people are now on tiptoe, wondering what God is going to do for His “chosen people,” the Jews, and fearing also that He may impose German *kultur* upon the world. Jews and Germans and all will do well to remember that nothing but justice and kindness and humility, real righteousness, can commend one to God. “The face of the Lord is against them that do evil.” All the wicked, no matter how highly they esteem themselves, or what they may think of the divine purposes, are an abomination to the Lord, and “are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.”

There must be a good reason for calling the wicked “worthless trash.” God’s judgments

are “true and righteous altogether,” not arbitrary. In some respects the wicked seem to be of some value. Of course in their own estimation they are indispensable. It used to be thought by many that the liquor traffic was “good business.” Some towns and cities would not abolish the saloon because “business would suffer.” But after closing them up business improved wonderfully. The money of the people ceased to flow into a few selfish pockets. Women and children got their share of it, and it was spent for useful things, not for something unnecessary and harmful. Why can’t men see that all wickedness can be dispensed with? It is not essential to usefulness and happiness, but is really as worthless as the chaff of the threshing-floor! If it were all blown out of our life, if every wicked practice were to cease, all the people would be better off. Wickedness is not like a fruit tree, bearing nourishment for men, but like the worthless chaff which the wind driveth away.

Wickedness is worse than worthless, it is harmful. When it is mixed with the good, it renders the good useless. Many a bright, happy home has been ruined by its presence. There may be a lot of good in the home, a good measure of love, industry, economy, integrity, but some venomous vice spoils it all. A man may be a good husband and father, most of the time.

But when he comes home drunk, "makes a rough house," beats up his wife and children, he destroys the happiness of the home. Wheat is useful. Many of us think more of wheat bread now than we ever did before. But so long as the chaff is mixed with it, the wheat is useless. A half-truth is the worst kind of lie. Half wheat and half chaff! Separate the worthless, noxious stuff, and give us clean, wholesome bread!

And chaff is light and fleeting. It looks weighty as it lies there placidly with the wheat. Good company makes it seem substantial. But toss it up against a strong wind! It can offer no resistance. It is insubstantial, so light that it flies before the wind in clouds. Wickedness cannot stand the test. Winnowing shows its real character. Every man's works shall be tried. It will be seen whether they are good or evil. We know down in our hearts that a wicked life cannot stand one breath of God's judgment—also that it cannot stand the test of time. Even in this earthly life wickedness is light stuff. It vanishes before sensible and just criticism. Bring it into court. Subject it to a righteous public opinion. Men whitewash sin, I know, but they cannot justify it that way. Even the offender rarely has the hardihood to claim that it is a good thing; his hope is that he may blind his critics by arguing that wrong is right. Chaff is not wheat, nor so good as wheat. But

no amount of deceit or lying can make wickedness right. Camouflage does not change character. It is impossible to justify wrong. And the gains of sin are insecure. The thief that rides the stolen horse is always afraid that he will meet the owner of it. He has no real title to the animal. Every purse that contains the stolen dollars has a hole in the bottom of it, and sooner or later the money will slip out!

The world knows that a war of conquest is wicked. No strong nation has a right to take away the land of a weaker nation. And what is more, no robber nation can keep its conquests. As long as it has the spoils of war, it will have the fear of losing them. See how anxious the Kaiser is to justify himself. He tells his people that he is waging a war of defense, and probably most of them believe it. If war is a good thing, why does he not claim the credit of starting this war? All the world knows that he was preparing for the war, for years. Will he claim the *glory* of it, when the war is over! What subterfuges he has resorted to! His prime minister declared a sacred treaty to be “a scrap of paper.” What could better reveal the moral attitude of a nation? Then the mad war lords threw away every precept of international law and proceeded to commit the worst atrocities of all history. In order to quiet the German people—just think of it!—the finance minister as-

sured them that indemnities assessed against the conquered nations would cover all the costs of the war and make them rich into the bargain! Surely this is the bottom of degradation? No, indeed. The Kaiser comes forward, in brilliant uniform, with rattling sword, and tells the people that *God is with him!* Think of the just God, who knows right from wrong, and abominates wickedness, having His name dragged into this infernal mess! Must He be associated with the destruction of homes, the violation of women, the murder of innocent citizens, the enslaving of men, women and children, and the slaughter of millions of men!

Wait! The winnowing time will come. No nation has ever yet been able to hold its unjust and cruel conquests. Where is the robber nation that escaped pillage? Think of the cruel feudal lords, how they feared not God nor regarded men, and look now at their ruined castles. Blessed ruins, now the home of bats, incontrovertible witnesses of the wrath of a righteous God! "He that takes the sword (of conquest) shall die by the sword!" "The needy shall not always be forgotten, nor the expectation of the poor perish forever!" God will right all wrongs!

"The mills of God grind slowly,
But they grind exceeding small;
Though in patience long He waiteth
Yet He surely grindeth all!"

IX

THERE IS A DIFFERENCE

THIS song is a warning to the wicked and a consolation to the righteous. It makes a difference which road one travels. Let no one suppose for a moment that, after toiling on in the right road for years, it will finally run into the wrong road and end in the same way. Again, let no one travel the wrong road and hope that it will run into the right road and end in the same way. The roads are entirely different, and end different. Like two parallel lines they run on forever, and never approach each other. The man that travels the wrong road must take the consequences of his choice, and the man that travels the right road shall surely see his choice justified. God is with the righteous. God is against the wicked.

The chief endeavor of the writer is to place the righteous where they belong, and the wicked where they belong,—to show that there is a difference between the two classes—*an eternal difference!* “The wicked shall not stand in the judgment.” We cannot fail to catch his earnest spirit. He draws a distinct, even vivid line between the righteous and the wicked. It reminds

us of Christ's picture of the great judgment. He made two classes, lined up one on His right hand, and the other on His left. The sheep and the goats! The sheep had always been sheep, and the goats had always been goats, though they had grazed together in the same pasture and had drunk out of the same brook. But they were always distinguishable. And in the judgment they take their proper places. To those on His right, Christ will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father"; to those on His left, "Depart from me, ye accursed." The righteous had lived right, and got their reward. The wicked had lived wrong, and received just condemnation.

There *must* be a difference. If there is no difference which road we take, what is the use in choosing? Making a choice is foolishness. One would just as well be wicked as righteous. Wrong is right, and black is white. "Let us eat and drink today, for tomorrow we die, and all go to the same place." It is unthinkable! "Might is right." The two words sound alike. But mere sound is not truth. We know that the expression is the worst kind of falsehood. It is the devil's license to do wrong, to justify the most ruthless atrocities. Right is always and eternally right. Wrong is wrong for time and for eternity. It is not cruel to say that there is a difference, it is simply and inevitably true.

We must adapt ourselves, our lives, to the truth. No good can come to us through ignorance of the truth, nor through ignoring the truth; nor through despising the truth. We must believe and do the truth.

I want you young men to *believe* that there is a difference. You ought to believe that wickedness is wrong, and the fruit of it is unhappiness. You ought also to believe that righteousness is always right and its sure reward is happiness. The attitude of your mind towards this subject will make a great difference in your lives. If you suppose that you can live in wickedness and be happy and come to a blessed end, you simply deceive yourself. And if you believe that a righteous life is a miserable life to live and has, or may have, an unfortunate end, you will make a sad mistake. I do not want you to have any doubt about the matter. Be sure that wickedness brings misery, and be equally sure that righteousness brings happiness. Be sure that God is with the righteous, and against the wicked.

Never doubt that there is a difference! "But what if one should take the wrong road through mistake?" It is nearly always futile to argue about morals and religion. The critic is usually insincere. And yet one may fall into confusion. How shall we know that we are *right*? To start with, we know that there is a difference. Right

is not the same as wrong. And from nature and experience we know that some things are right, and other things are wrong. We know enough to make us cautious in our choices, and to lead us to inquire for the right way. If we are going somewhere and have doubt about being in the right road, we stop and inquire. We should seek the truth. Talk with good men. Read God's Word. Pray for the guidance of the good spirit of God. We are told to ask for wisdom, and God has promised to give it to us. The earnest inquirer is usually rewarded with the truth. All I can say to you is, Search for the right way with an earnest desire to find it. And when you find it, walk in it. I am not your guide. God will lead you. "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free!"

"But apparently some of the wicked have a mighty good time, get along well in life, and die in peace." Is this really reasonable? Is it an argument in favor of a wicked life? You would not argue for wrong! If anyone should appear to profit through wickedness, you could not therefore believe that you should do wrong. Do not forget this: *There is no argument for wickedness!* Can any man truthfully say, Doing evil brings good? "Let us do evil that good may appear" is the last word of a degenerate soul. It is the superlative lie! If all the wicked had a good time in life and should die in peace and go

to heaven, they would not and could not stay there. It is not the kind of place they like, and they would be ejected. But as a matter of fact the wicked do not have a good time. Very few of them even have many pleasures. Most of them soon fall into the deepest misery, and not many of them live long lives. Just a casual glance at the world discloses the fact that the wicked have a hard time. Do not call the proud happy. It is a mistake. "When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed forever!" Observation will convince you that this is true.

The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus is Christ's solution of your doubts on this subject. He shows us that there is a difference. And the advantage is with the righteous in spite of appearances. In the end the righteous life is vindicated, and the wicked life is condemned. Righteousness is better than wickedness. For a while the wicked man seemed to have the advantage. He lived in a fine house, perhaps inherited it, was clothed in fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. As he came and went in the pursuit of business and pleasure, he observed Lazarus lying in the street, at his gate, among the dogs. The poor fellow wrestled with the scavengers of the streets for a few crumbs which fell from the Rich Man's table. Just

crumbs! He dined on crumbs with the dogs! And the dogs got most of them! It was really wicked for the young man to allow a poor beggar to suffer in this way. A good man, unfortunate, friendless, ragged and hungry, fighting with the dogs for a few crumbs at his gate! Why did he not tell his servants to take Lazarus into the house and give him good food? It was the wicked custom of the time, for which he did not feel responsible. No doubt the young man was selfish and devoted to pleasure, which is bad enough. But his worst sin was his treatment of God's poor. He showed no mercy. The cruelty and wickedness of an unmerciful, uncharitable life! He went on so to the end—and the end came, and came unexpectedly. There was a great funeral, and a splendid burial. And the friends made their usual complimentary remarks, and lamented the untimely death of the fortunate young man. But Jesus lifted the veil, and showed us the man on the other side, in torment, begging for the ministrations of the beggar!

Lazarus was a good man. It appeared that righteousness did not pay him in this life. Jesus did not pause to tell us why God allowed this good man to suffer so. All His hearers knew that the wicked often seem to be more fortunate than the righteous. He let it go at that. But the poor die as the rich must. Beyond the veil

He revealed Lazarus in Abraham's bosom—in paradise and happy. There was no funeral and no burial. It was merely observed that he was not in his usual place among the dogs at the Rich Man's gate. Jesus showed us where he went. Abraham solved the question, in his answer to the request of the young man: "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things: but now he is comforted and thou art in anguish! And besides all this, between us and you there is a *great gulf fixed*." The young man might have crossed the social gulf in his lifetime by helping Lazarus; but now there is an eternal and impassable gulf which neither one can cross.

Do not humbug yourself. There is a difference! No matter how things look here on earth. Usually the righteous are better off in this life than the wicked. They have more happiness, more to eat and wear, better health, and longer life. But there are poor and unfortunate good people. God suffers it to be so now. We look to eternity for the final solution of this perplexing problem. Christ is teaching us to look beyond the veil. It is better for a man to be righteous even if he is so poor that he must live on crumbs snatched from a pack of hungry dogs. And the wicked man is unfortunate even if he lives in a palace, dresses in fine linen, and fares

sumptuously every day! The difference is not in temporal conditions, but in *character*. "Though a sinner do evil a hundred times and prolong his days, yet surely I know that it will be well with them that fear God!" Moses had every good worldly reason to choose to remain as he was, a prince of Egypt. But when he was grown up, mature enough to weigh the matter wisely, he "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season; accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto a recompense of reward." Undoubtedly he made a wise choice. For there is a difference! Fix this forever in your soul!

I am aware that no man is perfect. God knows that we cannot attain to perfect sanctification in this world. But there is a way to judge whether a man is righteous or wicked. The good man does wrong things sometimes, and the wicked man does good things. We must look at principles, character. What is the general course of the man? Which way is he headed? And which way is he going? He may zigzag a little and still keep the direction. A wise old man, my friend in my boyhood, used to tell me how to decide ~~whether~~ a man is good or bad. He said, "Life is like a river. It flows in a cer-

tain direction, has a general course. The Mississippi runs south. Above Alton, a few miles, it runs north. But after a while it turns east, and then south, and on, ever onward in its general course to the gulf. It does zigzag, on account of the soil. But there, on either side, are the everlasting hills, confining the river to its appointed course. Do not judge a righteous man by his faults and mistakes. Has he good principles? Is his character good? In the providence of God he will hold on his way and at last reach the appointed goal!"

You must, and do, see that there is a difference, an eternal difference. In the face of this difference make your choice!

X

THE LORD KNOWS

WE cannot see far. Our horizon is small. All beyond it is unseen. Yet we know much about many things that are out of sight. Not all the things that are within our horizon are distinct. Accurate knowledge comes slowly and with difficulty. The things we do know are so few and the things we do not know are so many, and there is such a vast field of knowledge that we can never explore, that we are humbled and often discouraged. Who knows? Who can know? The Lord knows!

Our ignorance should not dishearten us. We know, or may know, enough to serve us in this earthly journey. God has not left us to blunder around in utter darkness. The road of righteousness is a *highway*, plain and safe. Wayfar-
ing men tho fools need not err therein. If we have enough knowledge for right living we need not despair. We are followers. "Let us know, let us follow on to know the Lord!" He will teach us His ways. "His going forth is sure as the morning." He created us with capacity for knowing right and wrong. And he gave us a conscience to urge us to do right and to restrain

us from doing wrong. Then He added His Word, given through His best servants, in plain, practical language, so that we can read as we run. Besides these things He gives us the spirit of holiness, to guide us in the way of truth. Above all, He sent His own Son, *Immanuel*, "God with us," to be our Savior and Leader. When He came He said to us, "Follow me!" "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me!" Become my disciples, my pupils. If we will follow Him we shall not perish for lack of knowledge. "Of those whom Thou hast given me I lost not one!"

"The Lord knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked shall perish." We have already considered the difference between the two roads. At the outset the way of the wicked is broad and comparatively easy. But further on it grows indistinct and difficult, and finally vanishes into oblivion—no road at all! But the way of the righteous, narrow and difficult at the start, grows easier and brighter and brighter until the dawning of the perfect day. Now we know that it is well and shall be well with the righteous; and we know that it is not well and shall grow worse with the wicked. Let us cling to what we do know and shape our conduct accordingly. We know enough today to begin to live right, and if we have made a beginning we know enough to keep on in the good road.

Traveling, going forward in the way of righteousness, is our business. The Lord knows the way!

God wishes to assure us that He will guide us, "I will guide thee with mine eye." The guide assumes all responsibility. Our chief concern should be to follow Him. Here is where we so often fail. We wish to see and choose our path. We are like the young ruler. He desired eternal life, but was not willing to follow Christ in order to get it. Riches blocked the road. When he was told to dispose of his wealth, put it out of the way, his courage failed him. Christ showed him the plain path: "Sell all you have and give it to the poor, and come, follow me!" It was not knowledge he lacked, it was *faith*. We all know enough to begin to follow. But we hesitate, or refuse to follow our Guide. The Lord knows the way, and we know that He knows it. We do not have to know, our business is to follow Him—to keep in the road and travel on.

A locomotive engineer knows the railroad track, every grade and every curve. "The Lord knows the way of the righteous," every hill and valley, and every crook and turn. He has traveled the road, every inch of it! There will be no surprises for Him as He leads us onward, no unexpected difficulties or dangers. We may rest assured of His exact knowledge of the way and

of His intimate acquaintance with it. In our ignorance we fear that we shall not succeed. It is a difficult thing for a poor, weak mortal to live a righteous life. Many good people make many blunders. Self-distrust is not unreasonable. But we must not distrust our Guide. We do not know the road, but He does. In this assurance of His perfect knowledge let us follow.

This word "know" also includes sympathy. He is a sympathetic Guide. Nothing pleases Him better than to lead us in the way of righteousness. He knows that the road leads us to happiness, here and hereafter. It saddens His heart to see so many dear people walking in the wrong road. He knows that they will not find what they are expecting. But it gladdens His heart to see us *trying* to walk in the right way. We shall find more happiness than we are expecting. He would tell us many things about the journey and its blessed end, if we were able to understand them. Tenderly and encouragingly He leads us on. "What a friend we have in Jesus!" A rough, unsympathetic Guide would spoil the journey, make it more difficult and very unpleasant. What really is more interesting and pathetic than a persistent and heroic struggle to live a righteous life? All over the world are men and women, old and young, strenuously endeavoring to do right. They are literally fighting their way onward and upward.

Little sympathy or encouragement do they get from men—even from good people. It must be a comfort to their tired souls to remember that “the Lord knows!” Indeed He does know, and He *cares* too!

Sympathy includes a willingness to *help*. There are many bad days in the journey of life—and many steep hills and rough places. Often one must have a little “boost.” Even the strongest grow weary and faint. And some are crippled. Vice got a hold on them when they were young. It was just a thoughtless mistake. In an unguarded moment temptation swept them off their feet. Since that fateful day they have been handicapped. The birdling’s wing was broken, and flying is painful. It is wonderful how tenderly Jesus treated such unfortunate souls. “Thy faith hath saved thee! Go and sin no more!”—meaning, “I understand; I forgive all, and I will help you to walk in the right way!” Yes, a little help we all need, at times. And sometimes it requires the everlasting arm to sustain us! He will never leave us nor forsake us! “Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had soon dwelt in silence!” “The Lord knows” how to help. He was tried in all points like as we are. We would better admit it: Human strength is not sufficient; no one, unaided, can live a righteous life! “The Lord

knows'' this, and therefore undertakes to help us in every time of need.

I am sure that these words also include the promise of final triumph: We shall continue to the end! He knows the way, He is our able and faithful and sympathetic Guide, and He will see us through. Of course we are often fearful, and sometimes ready to despair. But our fears will not defeat His plan. When I crossed the ocean the first time, a friend of mine expressed the fear that we should never see the land again. I told him that his fears had nothing to do with it; he was not running the ship. He might fall down on the dock and kick and scream, but the ship would still ride on over the waves. Only stay on the ship and trust the captain! When the tug took us ashore at Liverpool, the man looked back at the ship, took off his hat and waved it, and called for three cheers for the ship and her captain! We shall reach the blissful end of this journey. Success does not depend on our strength and wisdom. Our assurance is in the Lord. Neither will our fears and doubts sink the good old ship of Zion. We can make it!

If you do not catch this note of this great song you will have studied it in vain. The righteous life is not only different and better than the wicked life, it is also the triumphant life. "The redeemed of the Lord shall return, and come to

Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." Cast away your doubts. They cannot defeat you, but they will hinder your progress. All encumbrances should be laid aside, and the sin that so easily besets us, that we may run the race with patience and joy.

When the Israelites left Egypt for the Promised Land they committed themselves to the guidance of God. They chose to go, but He chose the way. It was not the way dictated by worldly wisdom, not the well-traveled road along the Mediterranean Sea, the nearest and easiest. The people were not prepared then to meet their enemies in battle. God selected another way, across an arm of the Red Sea, and through the wilderness. It was difficult and long, and apparently impossible. But the Lord knew the way and He was able to help them over all the difficulties. As long as they followed His directions they got along well. Seas and deserts and mountains could not impede their progress. Enemies and hunger and thirst were overcome. There was only one thing that seriously hindered them, their unwillingness to follow His leadership. They proved to be a stiff-necked and rebellious people. But God was patient with them, and after forty years, much longer than was necessary to make the journey, they reached the land of promise. All the journey through they were better off than they had

been in Egypt, and the outcome repaid them for all their toil. By day the pillar of cloud and by night the pillar of fire guided them. "If the Lord is for us, who can be against us?" Why did they not know this and render cheerful and perfect obedience?

I earnestly desire to inspire your hearts with perfect confidence in your Guide. Follow Him and failure is impossible. You can travel the road of righteousness. Never doubt it. Go on in the full assurance of faith. No matter how you have faltered and blundered and fallen in the past, you can hold on your way of righteousness and reach the blessed goal. God can bear you up as on eagles' wings! No weapon formed against you can prosper. You will never lose yourself and come to confusion. The road is all right. Your Guide is infallible and almighty. All the demons in hell can't snatch you out of His hand.

I once knew a poor man who had been a drunkard for twenty years. So dreadful was his appetite for liquor that he would sell anything he had to buy it. His wife and children suffered dreadfully. When the little boys took a load of wood to town to sell, to buy a few necessities, he followed them, collected the price of the wood and went on a drunk. After twenty years *he turned*. Very few believed that his repentance was genuine. But he quit going to

town—remained at home and worked his farm, made a good living and had a happy family. Finally after two years he was summoned to town as a witness. After praying with his wife for strength, he mounted his horse and rode into town. The town had one long street, along the river. Unfortunately the court house was at the upper end of this long street and he had to pass all the saloons, his old haunts of sin. As he rode up the street he fixed his eyes on the bluffs, and did not look around when old friends hailed him. Finally he reached the court house, went in and asked the judge to take his testimony immediately, as he was compelled to go home at once! The good judge granted his request. As soon as he was dismissed he mounted his horse, and put whip for home. There he sprang off, ran into the house, and with a shout of triumph cried, “I made it! I made it!” His wife inquired, “How did you do it?” He replied, “I just lifted up my eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help!”

What a moral victory! What a spiritual triumph! “The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger!” Never fear. Never doubt. Just follow. “For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous!”

PART II

I

CONSCIENCE

MANY have an erroneous view of conscience. Some think that when they are conscientious they are right. And very many misunderstand the function of conscience, think that it dictates the right course to pursue. But one may conscientiously do wrong, and it is not the function of conscience to decide what is right.

Then, what is conscience and what is its province? It is the voice of the soul that urges us to do what we know to be right. Whenever we fully realize our duty conscience commands us to perform it. Every human being that knows the difference between right and wrong has a conscience, and it urges him to avoid the wrong and to do the right. Even the most degraded savage has a conscience. No matter how low his standard of morals is, it is still *his* moral standard, and his conscience admonishes him to live up to it. Nearly every deed involves a moral question. But if one does not recognize the moral quality, his conscience remains silent. But just as soon as the moral quality appears, conscience speaks. John G. Peyton tells us of a

converted cannibal who formerly reveled in eating human flesh. His conscience did not then trouble him. But after his conversion the mere mention of eating human flesh horrified him.

So it is clear that the conscience is the monitory voice of the soul and that it speaks in accordance with the moral standard. It is not the function of conscience to set up the standard but to see that we live up to our standard. It is possible, therefore, for a very immoral person to be conscientious. Many a man thinks that he is complimenting himself when he says, "I am very conscientious." This may be a compliment, and it may not—all depends on his moral standard. And when one says, "My conscience told me this was right," we must differ with him. Conscience does nothing of the sort. It does not decide questions of right and wrong. Its function is this: To admonish us to do what we know to be right—to live up to our moral standard. And if we make mistakes, it admonishes us to elevate our standard.

How, then, can we tell right from wrong? The *judgment* erects the standard. When a moral question arises we must use our minds, and judge by the evidence in the case. Most moral questions are easily answered. Custom is not our guide in deciding what is right. Yet it has decided many questions for us. Men have found through experience that certain things

are right and best, and these things have entered into our home-life and community-life, and have become the custom of society or the laws of the State. All statutory laws are based on morals—or ought to be. But customs and laws should not be accepted by us as an absolute rule of action. We have minds of our own, God's gift, and we should use them. Many a hoary saying is a lie. Many customs are wrong, and many laws unjust. Men have formed customs and framed laws according to their light, probably the best they could do. But we are living in the light of our days, and we must walk in our light and seek more light. It is not enough to live within the sanction of law and custom. Many desperately immoral men take refuge behind the letter of the law.

In deciding a question of morals we use our minds just as we use them in all other things. We should not jump at a conclusion, but should weigh all the evidence. Is it fair? Is it just? Is it harmful to others? If more light can be had, we must get it. Not a stone should be left unturned. By all means get at the truth! It may not take long to do this, but if it takes a long time we must do it. Conscience does not bid us act until we know. And if we cannot find out what is right we do not have to act at all. Where the road ends we must stop. If Paul had only made an exhaustive inquiry before he per-

secuted the saints! He thought he was doing God a service—he acted with a good conscience but with poor judgment. Afterward he got more light and then regretted that he had not used better judgment. “First know you are right, then go ahead.” It is strange that men will use their minds in business, and “go it blind” in morals and religion.

This erroneous notion that the conscientious person is always right must be rejected. And the other erroneous notion that conscience dictates the solution of every moral problem must be discarded as dangerous. When a question of right confronts us we should begin to deliberate and make an accurate investigation. “Feeling” cannot show us the right. Prejudice will blind us. Passion is sure to lead us astray. Tradition is not a safe guide. “Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time!” What a fight Jesus had to make against tradition! God had said, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor.” Good and true. But tradition had added, “and *hate* thine enemy.” Hate is so easy, really spontaneous. But it is diabolical! The devil has tried for centuries to associate his maxims with the word of God—to sugar-coat his poisonous medicine! But we must not despise a thing because it is old. Really truth is older than falsehood. The truth, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor” was spoken before the lie, “Thou shalt hate thine

enemy." Falsehood is a counterfeit of truth. Tradition is gospel truth to many and a veritable "red rag" to some. But our duty is plain. We must use our minds, and decide for ourselves. Get all the facts. Form a reasonable and just judgment.

The search for the right must be sincere and thorough. A correct moral standard is worthy of an earnest quest. Use your own mind. Inquire of others. Men have always been interested in truth and duty. Read what the ancients said. You will get light from them. Ask the good and wise of your own day. Above all search the Word of God. It is replete with heavenly wisdom. And pray! "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God." He will surely get a hearing! Light will dawn. Wisdom always comes to those that seek her. "The path of the righteous is as the dawning light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

Moral judgment, not conscience, is our guide. Conscience admonishes us to follow our judgment, to do the right as we see it. And we must obey conscience, right or wrong. The poor heathen woman who throws her child into the sacred river follows her conscience and commits a horrible crime. Her conscience is not at fault, or she would not go against nature and reason. But her moral judgment is held in chains of tradition. Thus the fearful consequences of a

wrong view of right are made clear to us. We get no consolation from the reflection, "I thought it was right," unless we made the greatest effort to form a just and true judgment. God and good men may pity us in our ignorance but cannot justify us. What a fearful thing it is to have this imperative monitor in the heart! It is our absolute dictator. And it cannot be driven out by ridicule or dethroned by any power human or diabolical. We cannot shake off its authority. But we can do this: We can know that we are right before we act. And if we will wait to find out what is right, conscience will wait. It never gives orders till we have decided. The sheriff never hangs the accused till the judge orders him to do it. And the judge should never order it done until he has given him a fair and just trial, and decided that he is guilty.

Finally, let us answer this question: "What is a good conscience?" It is not what many suppose it is. Some think that they have a good conscience because they are willing "to perform an unpleasant duty." They simply like to do unpleasant things, to give others pain. We may truly call them "unconscionable wretches." To them a floating slander is "gospel truth." They are not afraid "to speak out." So they give wings to a piece of vile gossip. And when they are reprimanded for circulating a false-

hood, they fall back on their "good conscience," and probably shed a few pious tears! They really "have no conscience," as we often say, meaning that their bad spirit runs away with their judgment.

But there is such a thing as "a good conscience." Every one may and ought to cultivate his conscience, just as he cultivates his judgment. When a case has been decided in the light of all the evidence, and a just and clear decision has been reached, the conscience should demand that the decision be carried out to the letter. There must be no quibbling. "The terms of the armistice must be exactly observed." If it is decided that we owe \$100, we must not try to get off with \$99.99. Pay every cent of the debt! A good conscience demands that we shall do our whole duty. It permits no modification of the terms. No more, no less. Right here is the trouble with many people. They acknowledge a duty, but plead certain exemptions. In this way they weaken the authority of conscience. Remember the story of the avaricious man: He had never done anything for a poor widow in the neighborhood. One day he made up his mind that he would give her the biggest and best ham in his smoke house. When he went to pick it out the suggestion came into his mind, "This small ham will do, she really does not need the best one." His conscience

reminded him that he had promised the best one. He thought that "Old Nicky Ben" was after him, and spoke out loud, "If you don't let me alone I'll give her every ham in this smoke house!" So he picked out the best one, and thus strengthened his conscience. "No modification of terms," please.

Again, one cultivates his conscience when he obeys its behests immediately. If the duty is unpleasant we usually desire to put off the performance of it. Prompt action, immediate obedience, strengthens conscience. "Let not the sun go down on your wrath." If you will obey your conscience, you will sleep better. A man once said to Jesus, "I will follow Thee, but first suffer me to go and bury my father." This looks like a reasonable request. But Jesus refused it. Duties do not conflict. The man had made up his mind that it was his duty to follow the Master. No doubt he had the habit of making good resolutions. But he always had some good reason for not carrying them out at once. He must not go on playing fast and loose with his conscience! Paul said of his call to preach the gospel, "*Straightway* I conferred not with flesh and blood!" He did not consult his comfort or convenience or worldly interest, but obeyed the call at once. It is fair to say that his "straightway" obedience saved him from a career of mediocrity. A good man may delay in

making up his mind, if he earnestly seeks more light, but he dare not delay in performing his duty after he knows his judgment is formed. "Procrastination is the thief of time," and the ruthless enemy of conscience. It has blighted many a life. If William Jewell College had all the money that good men have promised to give it, it would be strong today. But they put it off!

The man that quibbles and delays does untold harm to his conscience. It becomes "seared as with a hot iron." If you do not believe this just try to move him to do his duty. He will acknowledge his duty at once, but will seek to minimize it or to put off the performance of it to "a more convenient season." You will find it much easier to enlighten the judgment of an ignorant man than to persuade a man with a weak conscience to do his duty. Here is where *remorse* comes in. The man that thinks he is right and does wrong makes a mistake, and will have regret and sorrow. But the man that knows his duty and will not do it has remorse, a gnawing torment. "That servant who knew his Lord's will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes! But he that knew not and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." Conscience may become "seared," but it never dies.

On the other hand, the man that does not quibble or delay cultivates his conscience, makes

it good and quick and strong. Morally he goes from strength to strength. And a good conscience quickens the mind. It forms moral judgments more quickly and more accurately. The man's whole moral nature is elevated. He attains "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." He becomes a moral hero. It was moral courage that made Jesus Christ the transcendent Figure of the ages!

II

MORAL COURAGE

LOOK at this picture: Jesus has just entered a synagogue. It is full of people. They have come for worship, for prayer and for instruction in the Word of God. Our Lord makes a quick and accurate survey of the congregation. Over there, near the reading stand, He sees a crowd of His hostile critics, Pharisees and Herodians. Just now they are very bitter, plotting to kill Him. Here, near Him, He notices a man with a withered hand.

So it was and is now. Nearly always the needy stand near Him, their misfortunes appealing to His tender heart; and not far away, sitting in the front seats, are the irreconcilable critics watching Him to see whether He will violate any of their traditional rules, that they may accuse Him! He was and is forever facing an opportunity and a threat!

What would He do? What ought He to do? What did He do?

He could have been expedient. "Some other time—'a more convenient season.' Why exasperate these already desperate men? Wait till the meeting adjourns and the critics disperse!"

But obligation cannot wait on expediency. "Ought" is a most solemn imperative. The call of duty is insistent. Conscience cannot be quieted with plausible excuses. This man with the withered hand has waited long for the day of healing. His opportunity has come. And this is also the opportunity of the Healer, for He came to seek and to save! Can He let the opportunity pass? Delay might mean disaster to the man—and to the Savior.

It was *right* to heal the man on the Sabbath day. The critics had a wrong view of that divine institution. If He should hesitate on account of their hostile attitude they would be confirmed in their heresy, and would probably brand Him as a coward. He was convinced that they were wrong and that He was right, and He had the courage of His convictions. "Stand forth!" said He to the afflicted man. Then He looked His enemies in the face and said, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good or to do harm? to save life or to kill?" He saw His opportunity and His duty. It was wrong to let an opportunity for doing good pass by, and failure to perform a present duty might result in death to a good man. Then he looked round about on them "with anger, being grieved"—with righteous indignation, that they should so misinterpret a merciful institution of the blessed God and should, at the same time, show such utter

indifference towards an unfortunate human being. Religious stupidity easily turns into cruelty, and cruelty that denies a whole and happy life to any unfortunate man justly deserves the indignation of heaven. "Stretch forth thy hand!" And the withered hand went out and up with a triumphant swing. It was done! The people went home with a new and radiant view of the goodness of God, and the Pharisees and Herodians "were filled with madness" (the raging of fools) and "took counsel against Him, how they might destroy Him."

This is a fine example of moral courage. It also clearly illustrates the fact that moral courage includes physical courage. A man may have physical courage and yet be a moral coward. But a man cannot have moral courage and be a physical coward. Our Lord knew that His enemies wished to destroy Him, and He was fully aware that healing the withered hand on the Sabbath would drive them to desperation. This deed of mercy would surely hasten His own doom. He had already been called upon to face the opposition and the scorn and ridicule of His enemies and had not wavered in His righteous and helpful course. But now He faces their extreme vengeance, death on the cross! So the morally courageous man is not a trembling physical coward. He has a courageous soul,

that fears God but does not fear what man can do, not even crucifixion!

But physical courage does not always include moral courage. Physical courage is splendid. All men admire it. Just now it is above par. Often the physically courageous man plays the moral coward. Peter drew his sword in the Garden, and struck off the ear of the high priest's servant. He had the courage to defend his Master. But a little while after that, in the judgment hall, he quailed in a cowardly way before a girl, and denied his Lord. This is a pitiful spectacle. Shame on a man who is willing to die in battle and afraid to confess his faith before a mob!

How shall we account for the moral cowardice of a brave man? Well, we are all brought up to admire physical courage and to despise cowardice. Man is a fighting animal. Some men naturally love a "scrap." And very few of us will "pass by on the other side" when a right hot fight is going on. It is interesting, and we have a secret longing to get into it. Nearly every one of you fellows would fight at the drop of a hat—and drop it yourself! Have you not walked around many a time with a chip on your shoulder? And did not some boy knock it off pretty soon? It is our way. But moral courage has been kept in the background. We have seen splendid examples of it. But we have never

seen the moral hero crowned! Our teachers have said very little about his glorious deed. He has gone on his humble way, "unhonored and unsung."

It is difficult for you to face the disapprobation of your fellows. They may admit that you are right and that they are wrong, but they want you "to side with" them, to do their way. And they are not slow in saying so. If you object, they persuade and insist. And if you assert that you won't do it, because it is wrong, then they will point the finger of scorn at you and call you a coward. Of course that is a false charge, you know it and so do they. But it stings and cuts. Who can stand before that awful word "slacker"!

I have had confidential talks with many of my boys about going to war, enlisting in the service of our country. Some have been very anxious to go,—wanted to fight, wanted to hear the roar of the guns and get a shot at the Huns. Fighting animals! Some were moved by a sense of duty. They looked me in the eye and said, "I have thought it through and through, and believe that it is my duty to fight for the liberty and peace of the nations, and, if necessary, to give my life for this cause." Some have talked in this strain: "It is hard for me to decide what my duty is. I have solemn obligations to remain at home, and I can get exemption. But I

cannot endure the thought that the other boys are fighting and dying, and I am here at home, safe and comfortable. I feel like a slacker! I would rather die than to be called a slacker!" And a few have gone, that, in my honest judgment, should not have gone, because they were afraid they would be called slackers after the war. As you know I have been an enthusiastic advocate of smashing the Huns into a lasting peace. I have been anxious to give my utmost moral and financial support to this war. And I admire our brave boys at the front. They have not flinched. They have nobly helped to drive the Huns back, and were on hand when the last crushing blow was given to them. William Jewell has done her full share in this war of liberation. Hundreds of our men have struck valiant blows, and many have shed their blood. I have known but one William Jewell man to be a slacker—and he was here only one year, hardly long enough to catch the spirit. And I can say this truly, some of the sublimest examples of moral courage that I have ever seen have been exhibited by some of our men who remained at home. It has been much harder for many of us not to go than it was for others that at the first went into the service.

In all my confidential talks with my boys I have tried to persuade them to face their obligations, to decide what their duty was, and then

to do it with the help of God. "Mrs. Grundy"—public opinion or gossip, has no very great terror for me. I do not despise the opinion of others, good or bad, but I am determined to follow the course dictated by my own judgment and backed up by my own conscience. Physical courage is very common. Almost every man, well-trained and pumped full of "pep," will fight to the death. And the courage to face death, in all the forms common in this horrible war, has my great admiration. But I grieve that moral courage is not more common, or more generally admired. Our brave boys will come home with glory. Bands will play for them, and banners will float on the breeze. And I hope to join in the acclamations. But what of the mothers that have worked with tearful eyes and prayed with aching hearts? They gave their boys with courage of soul! They could not strike the blow of might that smashed the foe. But they gave and endured with a courage equal if not superior to the courage of those that engaged in the raging battle. Hurrah! for our brave boys who fought our battles and helped to win the victory! Hurrah! for every loyal citizen who did his best to help our boys to win! And, Hurrah! for the courageous mothers that gave their boys and worked and sacrificed to win the war! Be assured the boys will join heartily in the cheer for the mothers who inspired them

with the moral and physical courage to fight for the right.

I hope, when the war is over and the world has settled down to peaceful and happy living, that all men and nations will recognize the dignity and worth of moral courage. When all the pre-war secrets shall have been revealed, I am sure we shall see that the beginning of the conflict was due to a lack of moral courage. Surely there were some good men in Austria and Germany that saw the wickedness of it. Why did they not throw all their influence against the war? Were they overborne by the war lords? Or were they enticed by the hope of gain? Or had they been blinded and corrupted by the teachings of the Pan-Germans? Now that the scales have been knocked from their eyes, they will doubtless see that they had "convictions" then, but lacked the courage to stand up for them. A few men, with staunch moral courage, behind the scenes, could have kept the curtain from rising, and this appalling tragedy would never have blazed out on the world. Not only did the Germans begin the war in a conscienceless spirit, but they also waged war without a conscience. Mr. Whitlock gives us an illuminating incident in one of his chapters on "Belgium." One cold night a German officer came into his office and sat in moody silence before the blazing fire, warming himself. Finally he

looked up and said something of this sort: "This business of killing civilians, old men, women and children, is disgusting. I am a soldier! My place is in the battle line." But, he added with a faint smile, "War is war! A soldier must obey orders!" A feeble apology for his moral cowardice!

A few instances are recorded of German officers committing suicide rather than obey the cruel and wicked orders of their superiors. I admire their moral courage but despise their poor judgment. Suppose such orders had been given to French and English and American soldiers? They would have shot their officers on the spot! Why this difference? German militarism had no conscience, and hence did not know that there is such a virtue as moral courage. Neither could it distinguish between real physical courage and brute force. This accounts for the singular conduct of German soldiers. They often displayed magnificent physical courage, when brute force seemed to be succeeding; but when they came face to face with death they displayed abject cowardice. It was hard for our men to heed their pitiable "Kamerad!"—they were so contemptible! The Allies began the war after mature deliberation. They felt that their cause was righteous. It was their firm purpose to maintain their rights and the rights of the weak and helpless at the cost of

every man and of every dollar. A majestic moral courage sustained them, and inspired them with magnificent physical courage. They fought with a conscience! And their moral courage made them triumphant. Let us not be deceived. We were superior in man power and resources. But it was the moral courage of civilians and soldiers that furnished men and munitions, and inspired the highest physical courage. When the smoke of the battle shall have cleared away we shall see that this war has been a struggle of conscience against unscrupulous brute force. And, as it will ever be, conscience won!

III

THE BLACK SHEEP

“**I** AM the black sheep of the family.” So said a young man when introduced to a friend of his father. He said it without blushing, indeed with a tone of bravado. But the father’s countenance fell. Pains of shame shot through his heart. The friend took in the situation, and with restrained indignation said, “Well, sir, you belong to a mighty *white* family!”

If a fellow comes of a black family we may take his blackness as a matter of course. But it is pretty hard to have any patience with the black sheep that comes of a white flock. He is a sort of unaccountable monstrosity. We resent his color. And it is very painful when he seems to be proud of it.

The Prodigal was the black sheep of the family. How did it happen? Was it *atavism*, “a recurrence of ancestral characteristics”? or, was it a spoiled boy? In those days they rarely spoiled the younger children. The eldest was the heir, and the pet of the family. Probably the elder brother, being a strenuous and exacting business man, had not been very patient

with his younger brother. But it is most probable that the younger brother had gotten in with the wrong "bunch." He had little or no responsibility—small incentive to get down to business. The elder brother was to get the estate. "Let him attend to things. I do not care to break my back for him! I shall get my portion anyway." His friends were of the wrong kind, also. They doubtless egged him on in the wrong way; at any rate, they did not restrain him.

No matter, *black* he was. "Birds of a feather flock together." The black sheep always has an irresistible desire to run with his own color. Home ties were easily broken. The routine of hard work and simple living became monotonous, and then galling. Finally he could stand it no longer; he made up his mind to get away, and as far away as possible. Work was distasteful to him. But he did not, really could not, make the journey into the far country as his ancestor, Jacob, did, with nothing but his staff, depending on God and his own resources. He was out for "a good time." That would require money. So he tackled his indulgent father, and got his portion of the goods, all that was coming to him from the estate.

You can see him bidding farewell to the folks, turning his back on the old home, that nauseating prison, and riding away to the "far country." "Riding," I say. The black sheep never

walks,—if he can help it. The Pullman car for him! And the fine auto—not a Ford, please! He chuckles as he rides on, and compliments himself on his astute diplomacy. And his “bunch” praises him—in the full assurance that they will help him spend his patrimony. The old gentleman seemed “dead easy.” What was the father really thinking? Argument would avail nothing. Advice was unnecessary. An egotist cannot take good advice. Warnings were superfluous. A fool never sees or heeds danger. Nothing could be done, at that time, for this reckless black sheep. It was best to let him have his way. It was not diplomacy that won the father’s consent. Despair dictated his acquiescence. He knew the boy must go all the gaits, and hit the bottom. Bitter, disgraceful, crushing! Only one hope was left. Some day the boy, broken, hungry, ragged, humiliated, penitent, would come home. He knew what the end would be. So he prayed constantly, and daily waited for the return of his wayward boy!

Away he went! Into a far country, Mesopotamia, or beyond, a Gentile land. No railroads, no telegraph line, no postal service—no communications with home! All the home ties were severed. He entered a new life, entirely foreign, with different customs, moral standards, religion. No Bible, no Sabbath, no synagogue worship, no prayer! Oh, he was far from home!

But he liked the new life and threw himself headlong into it. He had money! But a great business man said, "Money is slippery stuff." It is hard to hold. The spendthrift's hand has a weak grip. Money gets away from him fast. The Prodigal was a shining mark. The vultures of society soon discovered "the carcass" and, swarming around him, began to devour him. He furnished them a great feast. But he did not last long. No amount of money will last long in riotous living. Fine linen and faring sumptuously every day make it fly. "A fool and his money are soon parted." Financial sense is so important. It is hard to be charitable towards a foolish spendthrift.

But there was more in this than simply flinging money away. That money was his *patrimony*. His father had earned it, or saved it. It represented toil and economy. Honest money is sacred. But this black sheep threw it all away, probably in a few days, or months, in riotous living, in drinking and gambling with degraded men and women that never earned an honest dollar or spent a dollar wisely in their lives. He did not lose it in an unwise business venture—he wasted it in a wicked way on wicked people. What a shame that the fruits of honest toil should go this way! How many millions are spent annually in riotous living! There is a large vicious class, men and women, in every

great city that live off the patrimonies of prodigal sons. It is horribly wicked to allow these vampires to walk our streets. But they go on with their blood-sucking business—often under police protection. Sooner or later they will get the prodigal with “the big roll”—money that cost his father years of hard toil and strict economy. The black sheep will wander away from home, and the wolves always get him.

“Is it well with the young man Absalom?” This is always the first question with all tender-hearted fathers, as it was with David. I imagine that the father of the Prodigal knew pretty well how it was with his boy—just as it *must* be with the black sheep, sooner or later. Money all gone! Friends all gone! Hunger, thirst, rags! Tramping through that far country, hunting for a job! Finally he got one, a miserable one, and disgraceful for a Jew, feeding hogs! He had cast his pearls before swine, and now is a swineherd. The irony of sin! It seems the poor fellow was hungry all the time. He would have eaten the husks with which he fed the hogs, but was forbidden. Were the employers of that “far country” as great blood-suckers as the thugs? Day and night, through cold and heat, wet and dry, he followed the hogs. The smell of them nauseated his empty stomach. Their grunting distracted his ears and “got on his nerves.” He did not like hogs any-

way. Living with them, in dirt and rags and hunger, completely disgusted him. He was in a pitiful plight. The most intimate friend of his boyhood would not have recognized him. I doubt whether his father would have known him. I am sure that his elder brother would not have given him a second glance.

What does he think about, do you suppose, as he follows the hogs around? When in a far country our minds usually wonder across the miles to the old home; and when times are hard and we are friendless and hungry, we think of all the good things we used to enjoy at home. The faces of loved ones peer at us through the long, dark distance, and sweet voices drift into the ears of our souls. In our sleep we dream that we are home again, and we live over the life that we once thought was dull and uninteresting. We taste again the food that mother knew so well how to prepare. The Prodigal was still a human being. He still had a memory. "My father's house!" Mother! Love! Comforts! Now all so far away! The "far country" was indeed far away, hopelessly far! But the distance was not the whole trouble. The boy himself was far away from home,—in condition, physical, financial and moral. He would like to be home again. But he was totally unfit. He thought of his "riotous living" and looked himself over. Impossible! He was be-

tween two impossibilities—he could not go home, and he could not remain in the far country! Between those two impossibilities he sank into despair. But “he came to himself.” Probably in a vision of home, he saw his aged father sitting out in front of the house, looking far down the big road, the one he had traveled when he left home, watching, waiting, praying for him. Then he cried out across the weary, cruel miles, “I will arise and go to my father, and I will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight; I am no more worthy to be called thy son! Make me as one of thy hired servants.” And he arose and came to his father. And it was just as he saw it in his vision. The father was waiting for his return. “While he was yet afar off his father saw him, and was moved with compassion and *ran*, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.” Poor fellow! It had been a long time since he had received a kiss of love; not one did he get in that far country! He was home again. It was better than he expected. A warm welcome, decent clothes, a ring, shoes, a banquet. He was not worthy, he knew it, but he was glad. The black sheep was washed and made white as snow. His patrimony was gone, but he was his father’s son, and in his father’s house—“no more to roam!”

“The way of the transgressor is hard.” Living the life of a black sheep is a bad business. There is no fun in it, as many a fellow thinks. It must be hard to break the loving home-ties. And the farther one goes, the harder the conditions. Finally it comes to living with swine. Some prodigals do come to themselves and arise and go home. Many are ground to pieces between the two impossibilities—do not catch the vision of the waiting father.

Once a friend of mine showed me a curious ten-dollar bill. On the back of it was written in red ink: “This is the last \$10 of a \$50,000 estate, inherited two years ago. I am staking it on a horse race in the hope of regaining my fortune.” Twenty-five thousand dollars a year, spent in riotous living! And he hoped to regain his fortune through \$10 bet on a horse race. Pure imbecility! I inquired, “Do you know that man?” My friend was a big wholesale merchant. He answered, “The man is now working in this house. He began with \$75 a month. Now he is getting \$150. Next January his salary will be raised to \$200 a month. But the best of it all is, he is industrious and clean and happy, and a humble and devoted Christian. I want you to meet him.” He sent for him. Without disclosing my knowledge of his journey into the far country, I gave him my hand, and thanked God in my heart that He, as our

heavenly Father, lovingly awaits the home-coming of every prodigal. It is indeed good to see the wanderer return from that "far country." But it is so much better to remain at home—"white" all the time.

IV

STABILIZING THE SOUL

JAMES, in his very practical Letter, does not hold out any hope for the unstable soul: "He that doubteth is like the surge of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord; a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways." Like the surge of the sea, driven, tossed; God-forsaken; unstable in all his ways! Flotsam of humanity drifting on the sea of life! God cannot do anything for him, and of course man cannot help him. No one can *locate* him. You get a glimpse of him yonder, but before you can reach him with aid, he is driven off somewhere else. He is visible for a moment, then vanishes out of sight, and then re-appears in another direction. This is a vivid picture. The unstable soul is a hopeless waif, a castaway on a surging sea.

A man must know *himself*. It is a good thing to know others, especially good people, and recognize their ability. But one must also know his own ability, what he can do, and what he would like to do, and what he ought to do. We use this expression often, "He has *found* him-

self." Until one knows his own ability and fixes his heart on his own work, he is a sort of lost soul. He has not "located" himself. This uncertainty, indecision, need not be fatal, but it must not continue too long. The work of stabilizing must begin and go on until the man is reasonably sure of himself and of his work—"rooted and grounded." And one does not drift into a stabilized state, as a rule; at any rate, one should not abandon himself to drifting, hoping thus to come to a knowledge of himself and of his work.

Many a boy comes to college with assurance as to his life-work. He thinks that he knows what he wants to do, and what he is best fitted for, and even believes that he is destined to this work. He may be correct. If he has come to the conviction in the right way, he is right about it and blessed is he. But the college student grows. A college course means growth. He learns much. As he goes on, his horizon enlarges. Things look different, and he sees further. The ever enlarging outlook gives him new views of himself. Perhaps he realizes that he is not so smart as he thought he was. The fellow at his side is brighter than he is. Comparison modifies his stature. Standing among small folks makes him appear big, but when he takes his place by the side of bigger men, he seems to dwindle in size. And it may be that he is really

larger than he imagined himself to be. He used to read about great men, and measured himself by them, and concluded that he could fill only a small place. Education gives him a new view of himself. He sees now that ability depends much on preparation. Hard work, persisted in, does wonders for a man. His comrades look to him and expect greater things of him than he thought he could do. This inspires him. He works harder. And as he grows he finds that he possesses unsuspected qualities that need development. He will probably change his views of himself and of his work, and change for the better too. Let him never feel that he must stick to his first impressions of his life work. God calls all good men to serve. Each one must find his own place. You may think that you cannot do this or that, but it may be your duty to do it. And you may think that you ought to do this or that, simply because you said you would do it, when really you are not fitted for it. The most miserable man in the world is the man that conscientiously persists in doing what God does not want him to do—unless it is the man that will not do what he ought to do. He is a Jonah destined to be thrown overboard and swallowed by “a great fish” which the Lord has “prepared” for all fugitives from duty.

But many young men come to college uncertain about their life work, and fear they will

never know just what they ought to do. They want to be useful, but how? And their parents often get in their way. These good people think that their boy should not go to college because he has not chosen his profession. A father once said to me, "My boy does not know what he wants to do. What is the use in spending money on a college education? He will probably settle down on the farm, and has enough education now for that sort of work." So many good people do not realize that the farmer, the producer of food, needs a good college education, as much as any other worker, if not more. On this account many a good, bright boy has been strangled to death. He simply wants to be most useful, and wants to find out how he can be so. He is wise in two ways: He knows that he needs a good education no matter what his life work may be; and he feels that an education will help him to find himself and his calling.

One of the great advantages of the college course is this; it enables a man to find his calling. Very few men graduate from college and go away undecided about their life work. Education opens a thousand avenues of usefulness, and enlarges and lengthens the vision. It makes a man ready for new things, and greater things than he ever dreamed of. And education at this college nearly always gives a man an altruistic view of life. Here is an example: A few

years ago a splendid young fellow came here from the Ozarks. He graduated over a year ago. Just before he left he came in to see me, and said in substance: I am going into the army and expect to go to France. I may fall in the service of my country. I am willing to give my life. But if I live through the conflict I may not return. France may need me more than America. If she does, I shall remain there. When I came here, I expected to get a good education to enable me to make money and to get up in the world. My view of life was wholly selfish. After four years of hard work and sacrifice, I have changed my views. I am going to be a teacher. My object now is to be useful. William Jewell has done a great deal for me. The course is fine. I feel that I have done good work. But the spirit of the college, of the professors, has taken the selfishness out of me and I am leaving the Old Hill today to serve, wherever I can serve the best. The dear fellow found himself and his life work, in college. A good Christian education ought to do this for every fellow, and it usually does it, if he stays with it till he graduates. It fixes the heart. It stabilizes the soul. It reveals a man to himself and points out his work to him, while it qualifies him for service.

The college course should stabilize your heart and your purpose. Do not become discouraged

and go away, to follow some easy calling, thinking that you will never be fitted to do the harder and greater work. Stay with it "through thick and thin." Your feeling of weakness and insignificance is normal and just. You really are not fit now for any important work. If you are egotistical, "feel big," you ought to get out of this attitude of mind. The egotist is due to get a hard fall. It is better to come down now, and light on a soft place. At present you do not know. You do not know enough to know what you can do and ought to do. But you are following on to know. Every day in college broadens your horizon. Many a fellow has climbed this Old Hill in blindness and has gotten here the far-off look, the eternal vision, and has gone to his destined place, near or far, to serve God and man. His mountains of difficulty have melted away, the ocean barriers have vanished, national and racial lines have faded out—he is now a citizen of God's world. The scales will fall from your eyes. Your heart will cease to vacillate and become fixed. Your double mind will become single, and with eagerness and enthusiasm you will cry, "This one thing I do!" Your soul will be stabilized, and cease its surging and tossing.

Learning, growing, is now your principal business. Put your soul into your work. And as you go onward *think*,—think of the world

and its needs, think of yourself and your place in the world's work, think of your leanings, your longings, and your abilities. Measure yourself by this job or that one. And stand up by the side of some good, stalwart fellow that hopes to do things, and see if you are as high as he is. Not all comparisons are odious. Seeing ourselves in comparison with others is often most enlightening. And do not forget what a great and good man of the past said when deceitful men wished to arouse his jealousy: "A man can receive nothing except it have been given him from heaven." It is God and you—not you and God, as the Kaiser seemed to see it. The distance between the two views is as wide as the poles.

Every good man with a big job talks over his work and responsibilities with God. It is said that General Foch, every morning after setting the battle objective, retired to a quiet spot and spent an hour in prayer. He just did this, and said nothing about it. How could he help doing it? Jehovah is the God of battles! Foch was directing the greatest battle ever fought on this earth, for his own country and for the peace of the world. Men, his own dear fellows, were falling by the thousands, shedding their blood to gain the day's objective, and it was fitting that he, the commander-in-chief, should talk it over with God. It is safe to say that every good

man with a big job will pray about it. If the job does not bring a man to his knees, it is hardly worth his effort. How can you hope to find your place without the guidance of God, and how can you hope to succeed without His help! Do not argue about prayer. It is too simple for argument. It is primary and natural. You do not need to explain, just pray the best you can. Let the man that does not pray rise and explain. His prayerless conduct is unnatural. It shows that he does not feel responsible. He is not on his job! He may have an egotistical and false assurance, and he may "talk big" because he is *scared*. Remember the big talk of the Kaiser just before he fled to Holland. While he was boasting, his quiet, humble, silent opponent was praying. There never was any doubt about the outcome of the war! Do not think that prayer is the last resort of weaklings and hypocrites. It is the strong tower of good and great and wise men. It will clarify your vision, steady your nerves, and quiet your troubled soul. When the waves are dashing over your boat, and the wind is roaring in your ears, call on God and He will still the storm and quiet the surging sea. He will stabilize your soul!

V

THE FOOL COLUMN

THE necessary expenses of a college education are small. Luxuries and unnecessary things make college life expensive.

For years I have advised our men to keep books with themselves—to write down in one column all they receive from home and all they earn; and in another, all they spend. In addition to these columns, or pages, I have urged them to have another column, *The Fool Column*, and to write down in this one all unnecessary expenditures.

I fear that very few have followed my advice. It would require courage in any man to keep an honest Fool Column, and I do not expect most students to “rise to the emergency.”

One young man did keep this account for two years, the Junior and Senior years, and had the courage to show it to me. He was poor. He earned every dollar he spent. I gave him work through which he earned his tuition and board. He was a fine fellow and a fine student, clean, industrious, capable, but a poor financier.

The results of his bookkeeping? At the end of the first year the Fool Column footed up

\$34.50. I ran over the items—carriage hire, ice cream, chewing gum, etc., etc. He did not use tobacco. I said, “Isn’t that a good deal of foolishness for a poor, hard-working fellow like you?” He “acknowledged the corn,” and declared that he would “buck the line” harder next year. He did. With evident satisfaction, a year later, he showed me his book: Fool Column—\$2.40. I congratulated him, and told him that it was not necessary, and hardly possible, to do away with all foolishness, but that every fellow should try hard to be *a reasonable fool*.

Then I pointed out to him that one’s desires are the measure of one’s happiness. “Have simple desires. Cultivate plain tastes. Cast out all extravagant desires. They will make you unhappy. There is not enough money in the world to buy all that a man may desire. Poor people, with simple desires, can be happy. Rich people, with extravagant desires, cannot satisfy them. Now, what must be the misery of a poor man with extravagant desires? Keep a bridle on your desires, and use the severest bit, and hold them in the plain, level road, or they will run away with you and spill you out into the ditch!”

He learned the lesson. Soon after his graduation he got a good position with a good railroad. And he saved his money! Within three or four years he married a fine, cultivated

woman. Her father offered to give them a home, but the young man would not accept it. He built his own home and paid for it. It is his firm conviction that *The Fool Column* made a man of him.

A young man should spend no more in college than he could earn, if thrown upon his own resources, from \$25 to \$50 a month. Shall the four years in college accustom him to a manner of life that he cannot follow after his graduation? I knew a young fellow that spent \$125 a month in college. When he returned home and went into business his salary was \$50 a month. all he was worth! He and his mother insisted that the father should give him an allowance of \$75 a month. He was used to \$125 a month and could not live decently on less. A large *Fool Column* became a fixture in that young fellow's life. Who was to blame, the father or the college? Money will buy a great many things that a boy does not need, and with plenty of money it is easy for a sensible chap to become extremely foolish. Parents and colleges should at least discourage the student's foolish expenditure of money, for *the student's sake*.

Statistics are interesting even if they do lie occasionally. I should like for all our colleges to make an exhibit of the Fool Columns of their students. I do not know how we should go about getting the figures, but if we could get

them they would show us a thing or two! We should be amazed at the sum total—and go on as we are now going! It is almost impossible to be a reasonable fool, in college or out of it!

But we have got to learn economy. Without it we cannot thrive. We must learn to spend wisely, well within our means, that we may lay up something for the future. Money is not all, by any means, nor much, compared with some other things. But it is something of importance. “Money makes the mare go.” This proverb has enshrined its value. The man that has nothing is in a bad way, and has something worse to look forward to. Certain things—food, clothing, shelter—are essential to his happiness and usefulness.

Very few of us can look forward to an unearned inheritance, a comfortable living handed to us on a silver tray. And would it be manly to lie down on such an expectation? What is the matter with *us*? Can't we work and earn the needed money? We can—unless we are imbeciles or cripples. The strong man is foreordained to earn enough for himself and several others. It is the divine plan, and he should address himself to the noble task. The world is before him and God is with him. Let him choose a useful calling, as soon as possible, prepare himself thoroughly for his work, and get down to business. He can compel the money to come

to him. Hard work is a charm, an "open sesame" to a thousand avenues of plenty.

But when the money comes, as it will, at the bidding of industry and honesty and veracity and cheerfulness, he must be prudent and economical. He must not fool it all away. Some of it must go into "the strong iron box" of prudent investment, where it will keep, and work for the future. Save if it takes the hide off! A big Fool Column will put the strong box into "innocuous desuetude." The Fool Column makes more beggars than misfortune. Nearly all men, during the productive period of their lives, could save enough to keep them out of the poor house. But they have a madness for spending. Halt any beggar on the street and add up his Fool Column, for all his years, and you will be amazed at the sum which he might have now if he had practiced economy.

But are you trusting the Lord to provide for you in the future? Better read His signboard: "Whosoever hath, to him shall be given." And His warning just below: "Wherefore do you spend money for that which is not bread!" The good Lord is providing you a surplus, more or less, every day, and He expects you to save it for future emergencies. This is His way of providing for you. Do not fling away His gifts for mere trifles.

Keep a Fool Column. It will surely be interesting, and it ought to be profitable.

VI

COMPENSATIONS

WE make mistakes and suffer losses. But sometimes we realize our mistakes, correct them, and receive recompense for our losses. The gains are frequently greater than the losses. But we never suppose that it is a good thing to make mistakes—that the best way to become rich is through the loss of money.

We commit sins and suffer retribution. But not all our sins are punished in this life and probably no sin is punished with exact justice. If we realize our sins and turn from them, we sometimes escape the punishment, and even profit by our sins. This is not usual. It would be unwise to sin that good may come. We do not believe that unrighteous living is the way to success and happiness. Getting good out of evil is a sort of miracle. It happens sometimes.

But some mistakes are fatal. There is no retrieve. The loss is total. So far as we can see there is no compensation. It is often so with sin. No good comes out of it, nothing but evil results. There is a total loss. We wish we could hope for a mitigation of the penalty, or,

that in some way, the loss might be turned into a gain. But there is not one ray of light to cheer us. It seems to be a dead loss, and we mark it so and close the account.

Why is it so? Not only are the times out of joint, but the world also seems to be out of gear; a great machine running on without a mechanician, a sort of steam roller crushing all that get in its way. Simple people, ignorant and inexperienced, make mistakes, and never recover from them. They never even suspect that they are on the wrong road, and go on to the bitter end. If they ever wake up, it is too late to get back on the right road. Our only hope is in seeing our mistake and getting out of the wrong road. We have eyes and ears and brains. It is our duty to know where we are going. If we do see the mistakes and correct them, there is usually hope of compensation.

It does no good to complain that the times are out of joint. *We* are wrong and must get right. Doing the wrong thing can never be right. If wrong were right, the times would be out of joint, sure enough. Right means straight, and wrong means crooked. If there were no difference between straight and crooked, there would surely be a "mess." It is a blessed thing that the crooked can be made straight; that mistakes, taken in time, may be corrected, and that loss may be turned into gain.

Some of you waked up rather late in the day to see that you need an education. Once you thought that you could beat your way to the front, in ignorance, "by main strength and awkwardness." But you did not make any headway. You were falling behind all the time. The educated fellow went by you with ease and got so far ahead of you that he was nearly out of sight, and still going. Then you saw clearly that you just had to come to college and get an education, and you had to come at once. Now you are here, and the wasted years rise before you like a frightful spectre. Some of you have poured out your woes to me. Probably you remember what I said to you; how I tried to turn your eyes away from the past to the future, and also how I tried to show you that the past years were not a total loss. There are compensations for the belated student. Of course there would be no hope for you if you were still asleep, going on in complacent ignorance. But you are now wide awake! This is your greatest compensation. You see things. You know what you need and you are determined to get it, and you are getting it. You have struck "a bee line" for the blessed goal. And you will go fast. The recollection of the lost years will goad you on. In some respects you have the advantage of the younger students. They are doing the right thing, but are not so sure about it. Probably

they will not realize the value of their education till they get out in the world and try it. You have tried to get along without it, and have learned its value. You are "digging in" because you *know* that you have to. The belated men in this college, as a rule, become very useful. And, while "fooling around," trying first one thing and then another, is not a wise way to live, the experience often proves to be very valuable. A man learns a lot about human nature, especially about his own, and thus broadens his views and sympathies. Sympathy with other people is a great asset. And he gets business experience. Especially does he become familiar with the loss column. He will always know when he is "in a hole"—a thing that many people never learn. It is safe to say that the mistakes of other years will benefit the man that gets right and keeps right.

"But things are in a jumble!" Of course they are, and they always will be. We cannot *unjumble* them, altogether. Take things as they are and turn the losses into gains. Probably there are by-products to the business. The cotton seeds used to be a nuisance, piled mountain-high around the cotton mills—in the way, worthless. Now they are worth about as much as cotton. The cows stood around the seed piles and ate them and got fat. They had more sense than the men who were running the mills!

Things are all wrong, are they? Attend to your business, and this will do much to *unscramble* them.

A boy said to me the other day: "A. does not want to stay in college. His father has a lot of money and wants the boy to go through college—sends him \$50 a month! Here am I without a dollar, just dying to get an education, working three and four hours a day and making poor grades. Why can't we exchange places? There is something wrong!" "I am not sure of that," I said. "You have the *will* to get an education, and A. hasn't. If you swap places you must make a complete job of it. You have something that is worth a thousand times more than his money! You want the education and have the will to work for it. The will to work is better than a million dollars! Do not waste your time looking around. You are carrying two valuable courses—one in business, making a living, and one in college, in books. The work you are doing will bring you a great reward." The fellow that is always looking around to see how the world is jumbled and how things are going to the "bow wows" is getting nowhere. "The eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth."

There is something more serious than mistakes: sins, unrighteousness. Of course a mistake may be a sin. In some cases one could know better, and hence *ought* to. Ignorance

may be inexcusable. Sin is the transgression of law, moral or revealed. What of the sins committed in the past? Can we hope that good will come out of evil, righteousness out of sin? Wrong can never become right. We cannot expect that good will come out of evil. This view would turn the moral world upside down. "God forbid!" Paul persecuted Christians. He thought he was right, but had no right to think so, and his thinking so did not make it so. And when the light came it brought great sorrow to his heart. He regretted his past blindness and consequent sin, and called himself "less than the least of all saints." And this was a just judgment.

The wicked man repented and became a good man. Did he receive any compensation? He thought so. "But by the grace of God I am what I am." Conversion itself is a great compensation. Saul, the persecutor, became Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ—"by the grace of God"! He was less than the least of all saints, but he became the greatest of the apostles. It takes a miracle to bring good out of evil. Only the gracious God can do it. If we were to sin in the hope of working righteousness, we should make a vital mistake. The end does not justify the means. Sometimes the means are wicked and the end is good, but no thanks to the means. We cannot beat the devil at his own game, but

God can and often does. It is better for us to stick to the law of cause and effect. Every seed after its own kind.

But the grace of God works wonders. "I am what I am"—"by the grace of God." I am not what I *was* years ago. It is dreadful to have blind eyes and a hateful heart! To hate good people and to persecute them unto strange cities, to imprison them and kill them! And to do these horrible things *conscientiously*, and in the name of God! "O wretched man that I am!" Thank God I am what I am, and not what I was! This seems compensation enough.

But more: "And His grace which was bestowed upon me was not found vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." "I am what I am"—and more! The grace that changed him also made him an efficient servant, enabled him to do more than those that had not hated and persecuted Christians. If he had remained in sin he would have gone down to posterity as the arch-persecutor—he would have remained "the chief of sinners." But grace plucked him "as a brand from the burning," and turned his sins into a positive gain. For he *knew* that Christ could "save unto the uttermost," and he believed with all his heart that "the gospel is the power of God unto salvation." And his own horrible sins made him pa-

tient and gracious with sinners. "I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some."

It would never do to say to the wrong doer: "Just go on as you are. It will come out all right. In some way the wrong will turn to right—the curse will become a blessing." For the impenitent there is no hope. "The wages of sin is death." And even if one turns from sin he will always be sorry that he did wrong. His own verdict will be, "less than the least." One can never say, "I am glad that I sinned!" Yet I think that we can and should say to the sinner, "If you will turn from your evil way, the gracious God will compensate you, in a measure, for your losses." He can and does bind up the broken heart—and the broken life. Our wounded soldiers can never return to their old employment. But we can re-educate them and fit them into some useful work where they will be happy, and perhaps do more good than they would have done if they had never been wounded. Grace—real, helpful kindness—is marvelous. It works wonders. A nail driven into a tree will wound it; but if it is pulled out the life of the tree will heal the wound, and the scar may appear some day as a beauty-spot in the costly furniture of the elegant drawing room. Such is the wonderful power of life!

God's grace is even more wonderful. He has made beautiful Christians out of cannibals.

But what about the total losses? I do not know. I cannot explain everything. Some wicked men never get justice in this world, and some good people never get an adequate reward. There are two worlds. We are living in one of them now. Nothing is completed here. We may write at the end of every life, "To be completed in the next world." Here it nearly always happens that the first is last, and the last is first. Some dreadful scoundrel is always spreading himself as a green tree—flaunting his unmerited favors in the faces of obscure, neglected, despised, worthy people. And without moving one step we can turn our eyes and see veritable saints, and widows and orphans and old people, bending under unjust burdens, driven along the muddy highway by some monster in authority. Belgium and Northern France have witnessed a thousand instances of this kind, within the last five years. Do you tell me, there will be compensations? I know that wickedness brings some retributions in this life, and some good deeds are rewarded here. Bread cast upon the waters sometimes returns. But I am sure that the account will not be fully settled here. It cannot be. The wisest Peace Conference on earth could not adjust matters.

Some think that it will have to go at this—exact justice can never be expected. I am not one of that sort. In the next world all the wrongs of this world will be righted, and every good deed will be rewarded. Even the cup of cold water, given the thirsty traveler, will not escape the Judge. The German ambassador to Argentina did not advise his Government to quit the sinking of vessels, but to sink them “without a trace”—*spurlos versenkt!* “Do not leave a human being or plank afloat! Blot out every trace of the crime! Send everything to the bottom of the ocean!” How foolish! The sea will give up its dead. Everything is written in the book. A strict account is kept. And some day the book will be opened and exact justice will be administered by the great Judge.

Do not allow the inadequate justice of this world to awaken in your heart the spirit of revenge. If you were to take vengeance until your heart were satisfied, you would not make matters much better. The job is beyond your ability. It is much better, every way, to leave the settlement with God. If you had the wisdom and the power, you would “make a botch” of it. This is the word for you, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” He never forgets, and He never fails. It is not your province to administer vengeance. Better keep your hand out of God’s business! And why should

you try? He says "I will repay." Agag got what was coming to him, and Judas Iscariot finally went to his own place! Job's boils were healed, and he got up out of the ashes and saw many prosperous and happy days. And all the criminals that seemed to evade justice and the righteous that perished as Lazarus did, in the street among the dogs at the rich man's gate, will get their just portion in due season—in the next world. Do not despair of just compensation. Your life began in this world, but it is to be continued in the next. The gracious God will treat us all justly and mercifully. "I will repay, saith the Lord." Trust Him and wait patiently for Him!

VII

THE NEEDLE'S EYE

ONE day as Jesus was journeying through Perea, on His way to Jerusalem, for the last time, a young ruler came running to Him, kneeled down in the road, and asked, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Our Lord told him to keep the commandments. He said that he had kept them, but felt that something was lacking. Then Jesus told him to sell all his possessions and give the money to the poor, and added, "Come, follow me!" But this was too much for him. He was very rich, and, moreover, was a lover of money. So he rose slowly from his knees, and went away sorrowful. Christ then remarked to His disciples, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God!" "It is easier for a camel to enter in through a needle's eye!"

This is a striking incident in the life of Christ. It happened unexpectedly. Long before this, Jairus, another ruler, had asked Him to heal his little daughter. This young man was the only ruler that ever showed any interest in the teachings of Christ, except Nicodemus. And this one was courageous. He came to Christ in open day,

on the highway, and humbled himself in the dust. Evidently he was in earnest. He really wanted eternal life and he believed that Christ could show him how to "inherit" it. But it is also evident that he did not know what eternal life is, and was greatly mistaken about the manner of obtaining it. He regarded it as an inheritance. He would do something and get the assurance that he would fall heir to eternal life in the next world. A deluded soul!

Jesus must disillusion him, show him his mistake. "You have a wrong view of eternal life. It is not what you suppose it is. It cannot be bought, nor inherited. It is a present possession. It is the life that one lives day by day. You feel the lack of it because you are not living it. Follow me. In following me you have eternal life and will carry it with you into the next world. But your difficulty will be in following me. You are carrying a great impediment, your vast wealth. Dispose of this hindrance. Sell all you have and give the money to the poor. Administer your estate. You will not lose it, but re-invest it in heavenly securities—lay up great treasure in heaven. *I* do not want your money. I want *you*. I want you to take my yoke upon you and learn of me. But you love your wealth. You are a good, clean, sincere, humble, courageous fellow. I love you. For-sake all and follow me, and you will *have eter-*

nal life, here and now, and will not need to inherit it."

This must have been an amazing disclosure. The man had not the least idea that he would get such an answer. It dazed him. I remember well a conversation I had with a good man years ago. He was anxious to become a Christian, and according to the direction of his wife's pastor he was trying to learn the catechism, preparatory to joining the church. I told him that was not necessary. "Become a Christian first," I said, "and then learn the catechism." His eyes opened wide. "How?" he eagerly inquired. "Get down on your knees, and pray, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!'" He closed his eyes and thought for several minutes. Then he looked me squarely in the face, and said in a sorrowful tone: "That is harder than learning the catechism! Why, I feel that it is a thousand miles from my knees to the floor!" The young ruler wanted to *do* something. But when Christ showed him plainly what to do it seemed to him utterly impossible. In a moment he took in the situation. Rich now, able to supply all his wants and gratify all his tastes. Give up all? Become penniless, an abject beggar? Follow Christ? Why, He has no place to lay His head, is poorer than the foxes and birds! The very clothes on His back are a gift! Become His disciple, to be ridiculed and scorned by his fellow-

rulers? And this is eternal life? It looked to him more like the *infernal* life!

He was right up against it! He had done a bit of trading, but this was the toughest bargain that he had ever struck. No doubt it looked to him like "skinning a fellow alive." He wanted eternal life. He would probably have need of it in the next world. Sorry not to get it! He had practically everything else. But if he had to suffer poverty and disgrace to get it, he would try to get along without it. So he went away—sorrowful.

"How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God!" The Savior was sorrowful too. We have here an ocular demonstration, a concrete example of the difficulty of entering the Kingdom. Riches are supposed to be a great blessing. But in this case we see them in a spiritual light—they kept an excellent young man out of the Kingdom of God. It is hard for the rich to follow the meek and lowly Savior. The ruler was *young*. The vice of avarice had not had time to fasten its fangs in his soul. And he was clean and enthusiastic, apparently ready to volunteer for the great adventure, following Christ. But he could not stand the test. Alternatives reveal the realities. Which would he choose? Keep his riches or follow Christ? Must it be one or the other? Why not both!

The alternative seemed too severe, even cruel. Why demand such an enormous sacrifice? The disciples also felt the shock. How could Jesus secure a following, if He made such demands? And did He not need some of the rulers among His followers? Here was one of the best of them, knocking at the door, anxious to get in. Why make it so hard for him! Would a poor church now make it so hard for a clean, good, rich young man to get into its membership? But who ever heard of such a rich young man knocking for admittance into a poor church! Jesus saw the sorrow of the rich man and the consternation of His disciples, and added, "It is easier for a camel to enter in through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God." Another and larger bomb. His hearers exclaimed in one voice, "Who then can be saved?" He did not shut the door with a bang and bolt it; He virtually closed the opening. When men wanted to get into the Kingdom He pointed them to the entrance, no bigger than a needle's eye, a very small hole in an insurmountable wall. Probably His disciples remembered what He had said before: "Narrow is the gate and straitened the way that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it!"

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense." Christ was dealing with an immortal soul. All deceit is mean and despicable. No highminded

man will use it. But in religion we must have "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." The teachings of Christ are open, of the housetop kind. He would not deceive that fine young fellow, and He would not allow him to deceive himself. God is not severe, He is true and magnanimous. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." The needle's eye is large enough. It was made for naked souls. The heavy laden must put off their burdens. If the young man had stripped off his riches he would have found the needle's eye ample. But he would not take the great pack off his back. Not the size of the entrance, but the enormous size of his useless impediment, kept him out. Christ will not allow a lot of worldly rubbish to be carried into His Kingdom. His Kingdom is not of this world. The alternative is just and absolute. "No man can serve two masters." "Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

"Must every rich man give his money to the poor before he can become a Christian?" Not necessarily. But every one, rich or poor, must love Christ supremely. Any rich man that will not subordinate his riches and his life to Christ, cannot enter in through the needle's eye. And the love of money, as a rule, is the last earthly love to surrender to Him. We see this in this young man's experience. Young and yet ava-

ricious! Avarice grows with the years. How could a young avaricious man get on in the Christian life? Look at the thousands of men now that are loving their money and trying at the same time to follow Christ. A pathetic sight! They have set for themselves an impossible task. They are bombing away at the needle's eye, with great money bags on their backs, trying to get into the Kingdom. But they are making no headway, and never can till they consecrate their money to their Lord and Master. When they strip off the love of money, learn to use it in doing good, their naked souls will easily glide through the needle's eye into the blessed Kingdom of God!

Only a few days after this incident another rich man came to Christ, Zacchæus. He climbed a tree just to see the Master.

“Zacchæus, he
Did climb a tree
His Lord to see.”

—*New England Primer.*

But when Christ came along He stopped under the tree and called him down, proposing to go home with him. Zacchæus came down quickly and received Him joyfully. He was also surprised, but in another way—did not expect such an honor. When the people murmured because Christ was going to be the guest of a publican,

Zacchæus turned to Him and said, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongly exacted aught of any man, I restore fourfold." Jesus was pleased. He did not say a word to Zacchæus about the needle's eye. This is what He said, "Today is salvation come to this house!" Zacchæus did not even surmise that it was hard to get into the Kingdom. He was in the Kingdom before he knew it, probably without knowing it at all. His heart was joyful, and just, and generous. He had loved money. But when he saw Jesus and loved Him and "received Him joyfully," he began a new and blessed financial career.

The Master quieted the agitation of His disciples. He explained: "It is hard for those that trust in riches to enter into the Kingdom of God." Trust in riches excludes trust in God. It is faith in God that counts. The rich young ruler could not let go of his riches and take hold on Christ. But Zacchæus did it joyfully and spontaneously, as it seemed. "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." Riches are dangerous, no doubt about it. Very few men can break away from their deadly charm. It is the love of money, trust in riches, that reduces the entrance into the Kingdom to the size of a needle's eye. But even this colossal vice may be stripped from the soul in an instant by the hand of the gracious and omnipo-

tent God. Write over the needle's eye, "Impossible with men." But be sure to add, in large, bold letters, these saving words, "Possible with God." And when you think of the rich young ruler going away from Christ sorrowful, do not forget the rich Zacchæus who "made haste, and came down, and received Him joyfully"!

Our Lord is not a respecter of persons. He knows no nationality and no class. All men look alike to Him because He loves all. In those days the rich were regarded as the favored of God, and the poor as cursed of God. How foolish! In our day the situation is reversed. At any rate, the rich receive a great amount of censure, even abuse. It seems hard for public opinion to do justice to the rich. But much as we censure them, all of us want riches, and most of us are trying to get them. The love of money can get a hold on a poor man. Christ does not care whether a man is rich or poor. It is the love of money that is dangerous. We that are poor are very generous with the money that we do not have. We can also tell the rich how to use their money. What a wicked conceit! We know that we want riches, and we know that we do not use righteously what we have. Let us be honest in our criticism. But get this right: The entrance into the Kingdom is a needle's eye for every one that loves money, rich, well-to-do, poor. We cannot enter in, if we love money.

Remember also that our heavenly Father desires to save all of us. The needle's eye is the one, only entrance for all. And it is ample for every naked soul.

There is a great revival going on. God is calling all of us to personal sacrifice. This war is teaching us that there is a better way to use money than to spend it on ourselves—Christ's way. See how the poor are responding. There is a glorious gospel in the Baby Bond campaign. God bless His generous poor! Who would refuse to take off his hat to them! And see how the rich are responding with their munificent investments in bonds and with their large gifts to the Red Cross and the Y. M. C. A. Who can refrain from praising God for these great souls! The poor and the rich are clasping hands over that wide chasm of the centuries. Who put this spirit into our hearts? The Man of Galilee. And the needle's eye? Is it not ample for all naked souls? Millions are streaming through it into the Kingdom of peace and glory. Who now finds the needle's eye too small? Nobody but the slacker and the profiteer. And we are all hoping that they will lay aside their money bags, and enter in, and join the joyful, numberless throng of those that have learned the blessed truth, "It is more blessed to give than to receive!"

VIII

THE CONSOLATIONS OF EGOTISM

THE Pharisee was an egotist. He thought he was better than anybody else. He carried his egotism with him when he went up to the temple to worship. Even while he was praying, talking to the holy, omnipotent God, his mind was on himself. We cannot see any reason why he should tell the Lord about his superiority in morals. But he found comfort in his pious deeds and forgot that God knew him well.

Notice that his first note of praise was sounded on himself. He thanked God for himself. "I thank Thee that I am not as the rest of men." Of course he got a good deal of comfort out of that. He was sure of his superiority and equally sure that he himself had earned it—it was not the gift of God!

The Pharisee was a close observer. He had taken account of the sins of other men. And he had particularly noted the difference between himself and others. Other men—"the rest of men"—practically all other men, were extortioners, unjust, adulterers. But he was not. He was in a class by himself. How grateful he

was! Surely God must be proud of him. And to make his comparison most vivid—to heighten the contrast—there stood afar off a poor, degraded Publican, smiting his breast and confessing his many sins. What a consolation to the Pharisee to have that vile Publican there at the hour of prayer, so he could look at him. Heaven had ordained this special providence in deference to him. “God I thank Thee that I am not as this Publican!” “I fast twice in the week. I give tithes of all that I get.” No doubt he called that “a spiritual frame of mind”—real worship, and went down to his house satisfied. This was consoling, too.

The Publican, poor fellow, had a very different experience. He did not feel good. The sins of other men did not engross his thought, but his own sins were lying heavy on his heart. As he prayed he smote his breast. That was a painful hour of prayer. “God be merciful to me the sinner!” But he went down to his house justified—if not satisfied. Justification is better than satisfaction, as humility is better than egotism.

I have seen all sorts of egotists; so have you, I doubt not. I never knew one that was inconsolable for a moment. Egotists always could find in themselves an inexhaustible supply of comfort. Of course they made mistakes and blunders, and even committed some sins. But

they could always explain everything to their own perfect satisfaction and turn apparent defeat into a glorious victory. Some of my egotistical acquaintances never paid any attention to God, had no need of Him at all, and hence ignored His very existence. On the other hand, some of them were very pious, in a way, and professed a most intimate relationship with the Almighty. They reckoned that God appreciated them and, like the Pharisees, they enjoyed telling Him about their superior traits and pious deeds. And they always knew the purposes of God, just the meaning of every prophecy and every providence, and how to solve all religious problems. They were God's "special favorites," the elect, "chosen vessels." The question, "Who hath known the mind of the Lord?" never bothered them. All of them got wonderful consolation out of their egotism.

Every egotist has his own brand of superiority. He may boast of something that you consider immaterial or worthless. But his roseate view clothes even trifles with surpassing excellence and great splendor. It is usually something in his own particular calling. I have seen the egotistical blacksmith, the egotistical farmer, the egotistical merchant, the egotistical banker, the egotistical lawyer, the egotistical physician, the egotistical scholar, the egotistical preacher, and so on. Whoever he is he is al-

ways different from "the rest of men"—none quite equal to him.

When I was a boy a family moved into our neighborhood, the truest specimen of "poor white trash" I ever saw. There was a boy in that family who was the rarest egotist of my acquaintance. It was all about what he was going to be. And what do you suppose he was going to be? A stage driver out West! He would mount a box, and say, "Now here I am on the seat, reins in hand, driving the stage, a couple of big pistols in my belt; I crack the whip, drive over the mountains, right on the edge of the precipice, going like lightning, galloping through bands of wild Indians and whizzing past road agents waiting to rob my stage; I empty my revolvers at them and pull into the station, covered with dust-clouds and glory!" I can still see the look of triumph on his face. He always ended in the seventh heaven. And that fellow was a little, scrawny, ignorant, dirty, egotistical chap—and his name was "Buz-zard"! He had a colossal egotism and he got commensurate consolation out of it.

Most egotists can be endured, some are even entertaining. But there are two kinds that are hard to bear with, the scholar and the preacher. They take the blue ribbon. Any man that has gone to school, gotten anything like a fair education, ought to know better than to be a con-

ceited braggart. But—"knowledge puffs up." It is the best possession on earth, next to pure and undefiled religion, but it spoils many men. They feel superior, aristocratic. They love their titles—want to be called Rabbi in the market places, and everywhere else. I have seen some "finely" educated men that had a strut like a peacock and could "go it" like Sam Buzzard. It is hard to be patient with an educated fool.

The egotistical preacher—well, it is hard to do him justice. Words fail! He is a professed follower of the meek and lowly Son of God who said, "I am meek and lowly in heart." He is a teacher of the blessed gospel. Humility is the first lesson in the school of Christianity. What can be said of a Christian teacher who has not learned the A. B. C. of the gospel? He struts around, boasts, and lords it over his flock! He may have some sense of propriety, and play the game of mock humility, and still in his heart be thankful that he is not "as the rest of men." Oh, it is pitiful! Why, the Lord "called" him because he is as the rest of men and one of them!

But these most odious and unreasonable egotists get great consolation out of their self-conceit. You cannot puncture the egotistical scholar or preacher; but if you could, it would sound like the crack of doom. They go into ecstasies over their superiorities, live a life of

sweet consolation and die in the triumphs of their egotism.

Egotism is unreasonable and even foolish. It is based on a falsehood. When a man imagines that he is superior to "the rest of men" he simply deceives himself. He is not smarter, and he is not better. It may be that he is very inferior. Taking God into his confidence, to confirm his own exalted opinion of himself, does not help matters. It sounds pious, but God is not deceived. The egotist thinks himself superior but it may be just the opposite. The Pharisee despised the Publican, as his inferior. But in reality the Publican was superior to him, in God's estimation. Does the egotist think he is smarter than someone else? He is really not so smart. Is he better than someone else? He is not so good. If he only knew the facts in the case! But you cannot beat them into his head. God just left the Pharisee alone. Woe to the religious egotist! He will not get any light from God. It is no use. Light cannot pierce the thick wall of egotism. Christ said of the Pharisees that made long prayers on the street corners, to be seen of men, "Verily I say unto you, they have received their reward,"—what they wanted and all they would get. They got their consolation, the wonder of a crowd of *foolish people*. The wise know he is a "Cheap John."

And in his false confidence the egotist will run into difficulties from which he cannot extricate himself. The men that he despises will show him a thing or two that he had not suspected. Exalting self and despising others will surely end in confusion. In 1914 the Kaiser bragged that he would be in Paris by Christmas. But he had not reckoned on the French prowess nor did he expect the battle of the Marne. Paris seemed very near when he looked at himself and his big army. But he was really so far away that he could never reach it.

I read a curious letter the other day. A man representing some society which is working for preparedness, asked me to join in helping to counteract the Kaiser's repeated declaration that God is working hand in hand with him—the "Me und Gott" combination. He is afraid that the repetition of these words will poison the "subconscious mind" of the American people and weaken their determination to win the war. I do not think he needs to fear about the subconscious mind, for I do not believe there is any such thing. I wrote him I preferred to encourage the Kaiser to hold on to this delusion, that it was helping him on the broad downhill road. Let him keep up the delusion by all means. "God is not mocked," and the American people are not fools. God has never yet chosen an egotist for any great work, and He

never will. Christ might have chosen a cabinet of Pharisees, great egotists, but He did not consider them for a moment. He could not work with them nor through them. I cannot believe that He is hand in glove with the Kaiser. He does not like an egotist any better than we do. Let the Kaiser hug this delusion to his soul. It will finally lead him into a trap from which he cannot extricate himself. He is moving on towards disaster. In the meantime let him get all the cheap consolation out of his egotism that he can. It will comfort him and won't hurt us—and it is funny!

I never saw an egotist that you could down. You might hold up his blunders and his sins, and in five minutes he would show you there is not a word of truth in it; that his mistakes are really triumphs and that he meant it that way all the time—that it was one of his schemes. And as for sins, he cannot commit any. You never saw such a fellow that ever committed a sin because God is with him; and what would be wrong in somebody else is perfectly right in him; and what is foolish in somebody else is wise in him. He is like the cat. No matter how you turn him and drop him he lights on his feet.

But the last will be first and the first, last, in the ultimate test. Wonder how the Pharisee will feel? You may rest assured that he will knock on the door of heaven, and say, "Lord,

open to me!" Then will come the final word, "I never knew you." While he stands there wondering whether there is not a mistake, he jumps to the conclusion: Of course there is no mistake on the outside; there must be a mistake on the inside.

The Publican approaches, the gates of heaven swing open and he walks in. "I am not..... even as this Publican!" He now sees clearly that the despised Publican is far ahead of him. What a fool an egotist is! And his strong consolation is a huge cheat! A day of disillusionment awaits the man that prays this prayer, "God, I thank thee that I am not as the rest of men.....or even as this Publican!"

IX

THE ARMY BEHIND THE ARMY

THE infantry is the most important branch of the Army. Its sole business is to kill. All the other units support the infantry. Some of them fight also, as the artillery, cavalry, and aircraft. But the artillery blasts the way for the infantry and protects it with the barrage; the cavalry chases and cuts down the enemy after the infantry has broken its line; and the aircraft, planes and balloons are the eyes of the infantry. The engineers and service of supply are not fighting units, but make it possible for the infantry to do effectual fighting. The Red Cross guards the health of the fighting man, and heals his wounds and sends him back into the line. The Y. M. C. A. looks after the spiritual wants of all the men. All of our Army are in uniform, which signifies that all are real soldiers and have an important place in the service. If the men in the supporting units could have a place in the fighting line, they would be happy to serve there. All glory in the work of the infantry.

A soldier who was helping to unload ships complained to his superior officer: "I am tired

of this work. I came over here to fight, to kill Huns, not to unload freight. Send me to the front"! No doubt that very officer preferred the trenches to the work he was doing, but he kindly explained to the private: "You are in the trenches now. The doughboy could not fight if it were not for your work. He must have food and ammunition. If we fail for twenty-four hours, he will have to retreat and we shall lose the war. How could *you* fight unless someone should send you supplies?" The private, freight handler, saw the point and went back to his work contented. Success in this war depends on every man in every branch of the service. All of them are helping to win the war. It is only an accident that this or that man is in the infantry and in the fighting line. He happens to be in the hottest place, where he must suffer most and be exposed to the greatest danger, where he must meet the shock of attack and go over the top after the enemy. And he knows that the general staff are directing his movements and that his brothers in arms are supporting him.

While we honor the doughboy and are proud of his fighting, let us not belittle any branch of the service nor despise any man in our magnificent Army. Only about sixty per cent. can fight. The other forty per cent. are required to support the fighters. Yet all really are fighters.

All would fight, and all are exposed to danger. I imagine that it does not require so much courage to shoot a gun as it does to follow the fighters and carry out the wounded. Look at all our uniformed men, in all branches of the service, and realize that they constitute our Army; I mean all of them, from the doughboy to the general staff.

I could talk all day about our Army, and the glorious work of every unit, but I desire in this talk to call your attention to The Army Behind the Army. We are not in any fighting unit, and we do not wear uniforms. But we are engaged in this war. Our Government is trying to impress this fact upon us. The men in uniforms cannot win the war unless we support them. If we fail to furnish the supplies, our brave fellows will be defeated and liberty will be driven from the earth. If we lose our courage, the fighters will lose theirs and lay down their arms. If we grumble and criticise, here at home, the winds will carry our treachery across the ocean and into the front-line trenches, and our boys will curse us and quit. There is a mystic tie that binds the two armies together, the one at home and the one abroad—a wireless connection, of vital importance at this time. The fool pacifist and the quibbling politician and the I. W. W. and the Pro-German propagandist are all working with might and main, in secret and

as openly as they dare, to break the spirit of the army at home. At one time they attack the work of the Navy, then the work of the War Department, then the Air Service, then the Ordnance Department, and so on and on, *ad nauseam!* They plead the rights of democrats in their endeavors to destroy democracy and to establish the vilest autocracy the world ever saw. I warn you against this whole gang of "knockers." I presume that some of them are paid, and some are just plain fools—have always been "agin" everything!

Our Government has asked our women, through the Red Cross, to prepare clothing and bandages and bedding for our wounded soldiers. How readily our mothers and wives and sisters have responded to this call! They have made and sent forward shiploads of stuff for the dear boys. God bless this part of our home army! They have not been slackers. Every wounded soldier will be taken care of by American physicians and nurses, and they will rest in American beds, their wounds dressed in materials provided by the women of The Army Behind the Army. Find a Red Cross worker that is not loyal, if you can!

Mr. Hoover, acting for our Government, has asked us to economize in food and clothing, that we may care for our boys and for our Allies. Also he has requested us to raise more food, to

plant more acres, and make more gardens. Most of our people in the home army have responded nobly, and we have sent millions of tons of food and clothing across the water. This is real fighting, the best kind of war service, and for generations our Allies, as well as our own people, will rise up and call us blessed. We have profited by it, also. Eating war bread has not hurt us, and wearing our old clothes has not humiliated us. We really thank God that we could serve in this way. A few political "knockers" have appealed to our selfishness, and have tried to persuade us not to economize. They know that starving our Allies would weaken their fighting strength and aid the Huns. But most of our people resented this selfish appeal and justly despise the men that made it. There are a few profiteers and slackers who will not deny themselves a spoonful of sugar, or let an opportunity pass to make a few dollars. But nearly all our people realize that they belong to The Army Behind The Army and are doing their duty and helping to win the war.

Hurrah, for all our war work! For the Red Cross, for the Y. M. C. A., for "hooverizing," for Liberty Bonds, for Baby Bonds, and for everything else that helps to win the war and put the Kaiser out of business forever! And, hurrah, for our leaders! They *are* our leaders, and we shall not have any others before the war

ends. If we will not follow them, we shall prolong the war for years, and probably fail altogether. We are in this war for all we are worth, till we conquer. Look at that service flag! Hundreds of William Jewell men are in the service, from the submarine to the flying service. Any man that will not do his level best for those boys is a vile slacker, and I am down on him "like a thousand bricks"! Let us give the college yell, and sing

"Hail! Hail! the gang's all here!"

I do not like the knocker. He is almost ubiquitous and is invariably a nuisance. In every good enterprise two armies are engaged; one at the front, doing the work and making the great sacrifices, and the other in the rear, supporting the workers. Usually the men at the front do their best, and do very well. But it happens too often that the men in The Army Behind The Army are slackers. For one reason or another they do not support the workers, do not furnish the supplies. Take William Jewell College for an example. It has always had an excellent Board of Trustees, the very best Christian business men in the State. And the Faculty have been able and self-sacrificing and hard-working men. In every emergency the Trustees have put up their own money—more than all the other friends of the college put together. And

the Faculty have always worked for meager wages, much less than they could get elsewhere. But the people behind the college have been slow, and often indifferent. And ever since I can recollect there have been a few howlers and knockers. They have not given enough to the institution to feed a bird, and have used their influence to keep others from giving. Why? Be sure they can give reasons. If it is not one thing it is several others. But it seems that it never occurred to them to look at what the college has done with its inadequate means. Thousands of men have gone from these walls to serve humanity and thus serve God. Why do they not quit knocking and help and give to make this college army strong and victorious? If the mighty host in The Army Behind The Army, the friends of Christian education, would enthusiastically rally to the support of the college, the voice of the howlers would be smothered and we should "win the war."

The other day one of our own men, a returned foreign missionary, stood here and made an earnest and modest appeal for our support. He told us the missionaries felt that we were too far behind them. It is not the wide ocean that makes the separation, but our lack of sympathy and support. The missionary is in the trenches, in the front-line of the Christian warfare, fighting the enemies of the Lord. We are in the

home army. It is our business to forward supplies. We must do it! If we fail, the men and women "over there" in the trenches will have to retreat or perish, and the Lord's cause will suffer defeat. Indifference is probably our greatest sin. But there are some knockers. They are afraid the missionary will not make the best use of the money given by somebody else! "He is over there having a good, easy time!" Did you ever hear a more baseless slander? I heard the other day of a church member that got mad at his pastor for preaching a missionary sermon. Thank God! only a few of his kind are left. The trouble with most of us is this: We will not economize and work to support the men and women we have sent out on the firing line of the Kingdom. We do not know that we are in the army of the Lord. We do not see that we are hindering the efficiency of our missionaries through our failure to support them. And we do not realize that our lack of courage is lowering, even destroying, their morale. We are slackers!

In nearly every church there is a host of slackers—people that give nothing and do nothing, and rarely attend the meetings. Not half of the church members have any interest in the work of the church. They expect the preacher and a few faithful members to do everything. If something goes wrong, or does not go well,

they begin to knock. The preacher gets about half as much salary as he ought to have and that is paid by the faithful few, not by the critics. The Sunday school workers get no credit for their faithfulness and sacrifices. First comes a murmur from the slackers, and then a howl. Moses was a great man, though he himself did not know it—neither did the Jews. He has been a consolation to many a leader in modern times. The people murmured and objected and howled and rebelled. But the Lord was with him and so were some of the people, and he did finally get the Israelites to the border of the Promised Land, and had the privilege himself of looking over it from the mountain top.

If The Army Behind The Army in all the good enterprises of this world, would only be loyal and fight the good fight of faith! I have made this talk for my benefit and yours. We are in this army! We shall probably never get into the trenches. Our place is behind the fighting line. It is a big place, and important. Let us stand by our colors. Let us support our leaders, the men and women on the firing line. We dislike the knocker. We despise the slacker. Some day the war will be over! Some day our earthly warfare will end! Let us make a good report to the Captain of our Salvation!

X

CONCATENATIONS

THIS is a big word. It is not often used. But you have doubtless heard how an unfortunate man explained his bad luck, “a concatenation of untoward circumstances”—probably as clear an explanation as could be made. The word means “chain,” a series of events linked together.

The chains that bind us! We are free and responsible. But we are not unconnected, detached. We are, in a way, linked with the past, the present, and the future. Our ancestors influenced our lives. The hand of the dead holds us in its grip. Of course we are connected with the present. We feel and see the influence of our own generation. And we are forging links now that will bind us to coming generations. Our works, good and bad, will surely follow us.

It would be a great mistake for us to ignore our attachments. Moses tried to impress his people with this solemn fact: Their lives were concatenated. “I am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and the fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing loving-kindness unto a

thousand generations of them that love me and keep my commandments." Be careful how you live! It may require three or four generations to overcome and obliterate your evil influence. A long chain, of many links! On the other hand good is more potent than evil; it may endure and bless for a thousand generations. No man lives to himself, and no man dies to himself. We live and move and have our being in series, a chain of events and influences. Whether we know it or not, the past is now influencing the lives of those that will come after us. Certainly our deeds, and probably some of our words, expressions, will curse or bless unborn generations.

Does this seem cruel and unjust? It is not *arbitrary*. It is natural, according to the course of Nature. God said it because it is true, not in order to show His arbitrary authority. We are the heirs of the past. Our forefathers bequeathed to us some evil customs which are cursing our lives today, and some good customs which are richly blessing us. It is folly to deny the fact that we are chained to the past, and worse than foolishness to resent the fact. Really it must be so. It could not be otherwise without reducing all nature to chaos. There are chains of slavery, I am going to say. Bad men forged them. In time all of them shall be broken. But there are also anchor chains,

blessed ties that bind us to a glorious past and to the living God, our safety and assurance in time of storm! Let each one form his own link right strong and beautiful, and he will have no room to chafe and complain. Make the chain good and long and strong—"unto a thousand generations!"

In Ezekiel's time the oppressed Israelites used this proverb a great deal: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge." They believed that the father was responsible for the son—that God punished the son for the sins of the father! They laid their sufferings on the sins of their ancestors. Comforting no doubt, but false. "All souls are mine," God said. "The soul that sins it shall die." If anyone's teeth are on edge it is because *he* has eaten sour grapes. Laying our sins and sufferings on our ancestors is a poor and foolish business. Sons are influenced by their fathers, no doubt about it. But they are not rewarded for the righteousness of their fathers, nor condemned for their sins. Each one must answer for himself. You are a man and must act for yourself. If your father influenced you in a bad way, you must find it out and correct it. And if this influence was good, righteous, you must follow it even to the end. The Israelites could have saved themselves from captivity if they had rejected all the evil cus-

toms of their fathers and had obeyed the commandments of God. It was weak and wicked for them to whine and pine in captivity, and lay their misfortunes on the sour grapes eaten by their fathers. Why did they themselves continue to eat sour grapes? God said to them, "O house of Israel, I will judge you everyone after his ways." So will He judge us.

A friend of mine once said to me, "I *believe* as you do, but I can't *do* what I believe. My grandfather taught me, when I was seven years old, to hate the things that I now believe to be good and true. But when I think of giving up my false notions, I pause and shudder—I see my grandfather's face. And I cannot move hand or foot! The dead man's hand holds me! I can see that his view was natural, but superficial and wrong, but I cannot shake it off. It looks like I am predestinated, and must remain as I am!" I tried to show him that his grandfather had no right to dominate his life, and as he was dead he probably was sorry for what he had done. No matter. Each one is responsible for himself and has a right to choose for himself. Fathers ought not to put any sort of yoke, good or bad, on the necks of their children, but teach them to learn and to reason and to choose the right and reject the wrong. All yokes should be selected by the people that wear them. Jesus Christ does not impose His yoke on us.

He says, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me." A lot of people in this world have spent their time in making yokes of their own pattern and fastening them on the necks of others. They seem to think that if they can yoke people up in their way the earth will become a paradise. Chains of slavery, galling chains! That old grandfather's hateful face haunted the grandson. Why cannot people see that the moral or religious quality lies in the intention, and try to teach others to learn and deliberate and reason and thus form an intelligent purpose—to choose a thing because they know it is right! Neither God nor man can respect anyone that will meekly wear a chain of any kind imposed on him without his consent, against his wish and reason. If the Prodigal will not stay at home you will have to let him go into the far country and there learn that the old home was really too good for him.

Breaking chains may please you. Some seem to take delight in the work. But while it is foolish to wear a chain that frets and galls, it is still more foolish to break a chain simply because it binds. The good influences of our fathers should be respected and heeded. Good customs have saved many a fellow from going to the bad. I knew a good and great man that left home when he was eighteen and settled in another state. He was not a Christian, but he had been accus-

tomed to go to church and Sunday school with his mother. In his new home he broke this chain. Then he thought it all over, and finally concluded that his mother's custom was a good one. So he started to Sunday school and went regularly, and attended the preaching services. It would have been a mistake to break this chain forever. You have left home and come to college. What will you do about the home customs? Are you glad to break the chain? Better consider this matter thoroughly. Once you were *led* to Sunday school. Now you must *choose* to go, and go because you know it is a good thing to do. May your loving mother's face haunt you whenever you break away from good customs and wander into evil ways! She does not want to fetter you, but wants you to know and do what is right—and to choose the right of your own accord.

Why is it so hard to break bad chains and so easy to break good ones? We follow our inclinations, our pleasures, instead of our judgment. If we would only think! Analyze the influences that are shaping your life. Your parents were doubtless good people. They meant well. It was their wish to build your character. Probably they made some mistakes. Most parents feel that they have made many. But their hearts were right. If they taught you wrong things, or set bad examples for you, they want

you to break away from them. But if they really did forge good chains, to bind you to righteousness and to God, you must not break them. "From generation to generation"—"unto a thousand generations of them that love me and keep my commandments." This is an immense promise—and God, who is from everlasting to everlasting, will keep it! Think twice before you break one of these sacred, golden chains.

And after all, is it really easy to get away from the good influence of a good mother? Her chain holds amid the changes and storms of time. Many a son has traveled far, and mingled with all kinds of people, and walked in his own way, willful and conceited, and yet could not forget the looks and words and example of a sainted mother. Her reproof sounds in his ears, and he sees her sorrowful, grieved face in his dreams. The chain holds through all the years, although he imagines that he has broken it. At last it may lead him to repentance, and thus save him from falling into the abyss. Thank God for the salutary influences of good traditions! We can see why God has brought us into this world in families. The home tie is so strong. It is the anchor chain that keeps us from drifting to ruin. The Prodigal remembered his home, his father and mother, and the remembrance not only saved him from despair but also

inspired him with courage and hope—and he *returned!* “Blest be the tie that binds!”

Here is a “chain gang” to which all of us belong. There is no escape from it. Coming down through the ages, from a thousand points, are streams of influence, centering in each one of us, and helping mightily to shape our lives. And radiating from each one of us, streams of influence are flowing on, to bless or curse future generations—an eternal perpetuation. What are we going to do about it? Some of us imagine that we are free, no chains to bind us. This is a delusion. One may break the chains of the past, and forge worse ones for himself and his descendants. He breaks away from the “chain gang” and lands in prison.

Some are abject slaves. They accept all customs and traditions of “the fathers,” have no mind and no purpose to make things better. Political and religious traditions seem to have a special charm for these mental serfs. They live and move and sleep in the ancient chains. We should do our own thinking and distinguish between the right and the wrong, the good and the bad. Accumulated experiences should produce wisdom. What the fathers handed down to us constitutes a great patrimony. Some of the assets are out of date and are probably worthless. Time has worked many changes. But other assets have increased in value, and constitute our

real and permanent riches. No thoughtful man can survey his patrimony and lightly esteem it. And if the chains are forged of righteous links, he will gladly wear them. He is not a slave when he deliberately chooses to follow righteous traditions, but an intelligent and happy freeman. He does not resent holy restraints. On the other hand he is not afraid to lay aside the useless, nor does he hesitate to reject the wrong. In this he follows the wishes of the fathers, for they meant well, to be good and to do their children good. And he would say to his own descendants, "Follow me as I follow God. Do not perpetuate my mistakes and sins."

Every good man is devoutly thankful for the blessings handed down by his forefathers and earnestly wishes himself to be a blessing to coming generations. He hopes that the evil he has done will be buried with him, and the good he has done will go on down the ages. "Only remembered by the good we have done!" May every harmful and wicked chain be broken. May every good chain be strengthened and lengthened, and endure "unto a thousand generations." One thing is certain, our works do follow us, and will follow us into eternity. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors: and their works do follow them."

XI

SOLILOQUIZING

ONCE, when Jesus was reclining at a feast, in the house of Simon, the Pharisee, a poor woman came and anointed His feet with precious ointment. She did not say a word, just wept over His feet and wiped them with her hair, and put on the precious ointment. We can well imagine that her heart was full of inarticulate penitential words. Simon was horrified, and *spake within himself*: "This man, if he were a prophet, would have perceived who and what manner of woman this is which toucheth him, that she is a sinner." His soliloquizing was conclusive to him—Jesus was not a prophet. It is very easy, in soliloquizing, to set aside all the rules of logic and to arrive at the desired conclusion.

On another occasion Jesus was speaking to a vast throng, the house was crowded and the street outside was packed. Four strong men brought a sick friend, a paralytic, to the great Healer, to be healed. But they could not get at Him in the usual way. "Certain scribes and Pharisees were sitting there," had the comfortable and close-up seats, to criticise, and thus ob-

structed the approach of the needy. But the friends were resourceful. They carried the man to the roof, tore up the tiles, and let him down in front of the Lord. Jesus looked down on him with compassion, and said, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven." Then the critics began to *reason in their hearts*, "Why doth this man thus speak? He blasphemeth! Who can forgive sins but one, even God?" It is so easy to say things in the heart! But it requires moral courage to speak out loud.

Sometimes thoughts are too personal or too sacred for articulate speech. Hannah "was in bitterness of soul" when she prayed at the door of the tabernacle, in Shiloh. "She spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard." Poor old Eli saw her and rebuked her for being drunk. But she protested her innocence. "No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful heart: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I poured out my soul before Jehovah." God knows the silent, unspoken words of the soul. Eli answered and said, "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant thy petition that thou hast asked of Him." "So the woman went her way, and did eat; and her countenance was no more sad." How many inaudible prayers have been made and answered! Indeed it is sometimes impossible to find words to express the thoughts of the heart.

All of us talk to ourselves. Even loquacious people, those that seem to talk all the time, find plenty of time to soliloquize. Desires come, and thoughts spring up in the mind, and we put them into words, first in our own hearts and then in spoken language. Probably we cannot help talking to ourselves. It seems the natural thing to do. But we should weigh all our words before we speak them to others. It is not so bad to think a thing as it is to speak it. True it may be a bad thing even to speak a thing in the heart. Here is where we need wisdom. Judgment should be exercised. After we have said something to ourselves we ought to consider what effect it will have before we impart it to others. It may be best to leave it unspoken. Indeed it may be best never to repeat it to ourselves. What a blessing it would be to the world if all bad thoughts had been smothered in the heart! A smouldering fire may break into a flame and consume a whole city. Think how much damage cigarette stubs have done. "Behold, how great a forest is kindled by how small a fire!"

When we speak to ourselves about ourselves, we usually speak comfortably. Sometimes we censure ourselves. You have probably called yourself a fool a great many times. You would not tell anyone else that you had made a fool of yourself, nor would you allow anyone else to call you a fool. You would resent such language

and defend yourself though you had already admitted it to yourself. One should be careful not to say untrue or unjust things to oneself. But on the other hand one should not unjustly excuse oneself. Tell the truth when you talk to yourself. All soliloquizing should be honest. Self-flattery or self-gratulation is foolish and harmful. If a man is not honest with himself he will not be honest with others. It is so easy to deceive ourselves. No one is listening. No one will talk back. No one will puncture our gas bubbles. We can warp our judgment and hush the voice of conscience, for there is no one to molest or make us afraid. And it is possible to keep on repeating a lie to ourselves until we believe it. Every egotist should have a faithful friend to whom he can declare the inmost thoughts of his heart. A friend can point out the weak places in his reasoning and show him that his conclusions are wrong. Better be punctured in private than burst wide open in public. For sooner or later the egotist must tell all the wonderful things he has said to himself, and then the horse-laugh.

But we soliloquize about others. When we meet a man we tell ourselves what we think of him. And when we hear another talk we form an opinion of his ideas and also of him. Of course we should weigh his words. "Take heed how you hear," and what you hear. No sensible

man should expect us to swallow all he says. He is supposed to talk good sense and to give good reasons for his views. And we must test his words by the rules of reason. But we can be unjustly critical. His words may be true, and may therefore have a sting in them. They condemn us, and so we say things about the speaker within ourselves. He sets us to soliloquizing. We are not exactly prepared to state our objection publicly. Probably we are afraid that our reasoning will not hold water. But we can talk to ourselves fearlessly. We can even curse him to our hearts' content! No one will hear what we say. The scribes and Pharisees began in this way: Very early in Christ's ministry they formed an unfavorable opinion of Him and His teaching. They were always present, right there in the front seats. Probably they did not comprehend the new teaching, but it did not *sound* just right. And His person, and His frank, simple speech were not after their tastes and methods. The people also were entirely too enthusiastic about Him. He drew great crowds and moved them without any effort. Where would the thing end? An uneasy feeling gripped their souls. Of course they conferred with one another and tried to get the hang of things. And they used all their influence, in a cowardly, sneaking way, to counteract His teachings. But they made no headway.

Things were growing worse all the time. Now and then they ventured a few words of opposition. In these feeble efforts they failed. He never hesitated to answer them and the answer was always a bolt out of the blue; it smote them down and made them ridiculous before the people. What they said in their hearts during His ministry, their pusillanimous and illogical soliloquizing, would fill thousands of large volumes.

Here is the point: Talking to oneself may seem innocent and safe. But it is neither. Those enemies of Christ spoke to themselves, reasoned within themselves, so persistently and so long, that they poisoned their own hearts—auto-intoxication—and broke out into audible speech. They kindled a fire in their hearts that finally burst forth and consumed them. Bitter, unjust, and untrue soliloquizing is both wicked and dangerous. We know what those people finally did—committed the most horrible crime that ever blackened the pages of history. Jesus said to them, “Ye serpents, ye offspring of vipers, how shall ye escape the judgment of hell?” No doubt they felt grievously slandered. Not one of them knew that his heart was a viper’s nest, and a great brood of reptiles were just crawling forth to do their deadly work. Soon their soliloquizing broke out into loud, discordant, false, cruel words. Hear some of them:

“Away with Him!” “Crucify Him!” “Not this man but Barabbas!” “They mocked Him!” “They railed on Him, wagging their heads!” And they rejoiced in all the indignities heaped upon Him by the ignorant Roman soldiers.

But there is such a thing as good, wholesome soliloquizing. We may hide good words in our hearts. Mary hid many precious things concerning her illustrious Son in her loving heart—too sacred for audible speech. We do not wish to pronounce all our words. They are our own. We are not afraid to speak, or ashamed; but they concern us alone—and our heavenly Father. God has given us the gift of inarticulate speech, for our private use, for good and not for evil—“a private wire.” We get comfort out of it. And in using it we build, as it were, a language of our own, the language of the soul. In this language we love and pray. Hannah used it at the door of the tabernacle. Her lips moved, but no word came forth, not even a whisper. In her heart she was talking with God.

We must not hide all the good things in our hearts. Words of love must not be mere lip-speech, neither should they lie silent forever in the heart. How many beautiful words are never spoken and never recorded! The world is made poor by these buried treasures. We are afraid to speak our intimate thoughts? Afraid of ridicule? Speak them to people that *know*. Afraid

of possibly hidden insincerity? Then do not speak them. Better let a dozen sincere words die in the heart than to speak one insincere word of love. But go on soliloquizing. You can speak sincerely to yourself in the presence of God. I know that the egotistical Pharisee became so brazen that he could look God in the face and lie about himself. But he did not love. He despised others. You will not delude yourself if you speak true, loving things in your heart. And the more you talk to yourself in the right way, the greater will be your desire to speak out loud. "While I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue!" Your friend is probably waiting for your lovely musings. He is not simply curious. He just knows that your soul has indited many good and pleasant words, and the sound of them will make sweet music to him. He longs for a look into your loving soul. Do not let him wait too long! It will do him no good for you to speak out at his grave. Inarticulate speech struggles for expression. And really we never learn a language well till we speak it and hear it spoken. Certainly others will never learn the language of our souls well until they hear our words.

Your heart is like a garden of flowers. Your friends may stand and look over the fence at your treasures. But is this all? Won't you invite them in—at any rate, those that love flow-

ers? Let them walk through it with you. And pluck some of the prettiest and most fragrant ones, for them to carry home. You will thus learn to enjoy your own flowers, and you will cultivate your garden with greater zeal.

If the good Lord could only direct and control all the soliloquizing of human hearts! If love could preside over all inarticulate speech! If we would speak only good, true, pure, loving words in our hearts! There would come a transformation of the world. A new heart, a new earth, a new heaven! Well, it will help if each one of us will do the right kind of soliloquizing. Before we begin a conversation with ourselves, let us open the door of our hearts and admit God to the audience. As a man soliloquizes, so is he.

XII

THE CALL OF MATTHEW

I ADMIRE Matthew. I'll tell you why: He could reason. He had an active mind. And he could make up his mind. As soon as he was convinced he formed a fixed purpose, resolved, intended to act. Then he acted at once. Some people can see things and can make up their minds about what is right, but do not act—allow fear or expediency to hold them back. I do not admire people that are not expeditious. Being too slow is often equivalent to failure. What is the good of foreseeing clearly if we are going to hesitate and delay? What is the wisdom or advantage of putting off till tomorrow what we know we ought to do today?

Matthew was not a popular man in his community. It seems that he had a good many friends among his own kind, the publicans, tax-gatherers. But with the people in general he did not stand well. His business made him unpopular. The tax collector has always been an "undesirable citizen." There is no evidence that Matthew was dishonest, or unkind to his neighbors. I cannot imagine that he would be unjust or even impolite. But we may be sure

that most of his neighbors, as they passed his "place of toll," appropriately expressed their contempt for him. No doubt he received many unpleasant attentions. But I do not suppose that he resented them. I am sure that he was always on the alert. No one escaped his keen business eye, and all from whom custom was due had to pay. Doubtless his business was unpleasant to him. Sitting there day by day, collecting taxes from resentful people, was monotonous as well as unpleasant. But he stuck to his job faithfully.

The life that streamed by him was in many ways interesting. All kinds of people passed, his own people, the Jews, unhappy and sullen, and the foreigners, Greeks and other nationalities, intent on pleasure or business. What an opportunity he had for studying faces, fashions, dispositions, and races of men! He had probably seen Jesus and His disciples going by, many times. And he had heard of His mighty works, probably had seen some of them, though I do not suppose that he would leave his "place of toll" to see the sights. Probably also he had heard a few of Christ's wonderful sermons. He was the kind of man to think over what he saw and heard. And perhaps there was a secret hope in his heart every day when he took his seat that the wonderful Preacher and Healer would pass his way that very day. And one day his

hope was realized! He heard a noise of many voices and glancing down the street he saw the Son of Man approaching. How his heart quickened its beating and his eyes brightened into a most eager look! There he was, coming his way! Surely He would pass right by his "place of toll." He got a good look at His gentle, kind face. To his surprise the Master paused just before his place, and looked into his face and heart, and said in a most gentle and persuasive voice, "Matthew, follow me!" How could he leave his business? What did the Master want with him? A thousand thoughts chased one another through his mind. His soul thrilled. But the Master began to move forward. Was this all He would say? It seemed for a moment that he was about to lose the greatest opportunity of his life. Quick as a flash he left his place and followed Jesus. Only the night before he had been in that vast throng, when Jesus healed the paralytic, borne by four of his friends. Probably he would see many more gracious and wonderful deeds. What was his business compared with such a prospect? He had heard the call, no mistake, and he obeyed!

Do you not admire a man who can think rapidly and clearly? We all like wide-awake people. Slow or stolid people irritate us. Why should it take a man all day to see the nose on his own face? He will not get anywhere. He is

too slow to catch a freight train. Many a man owes his failure in life to sluggishness—"a slow coach." Some people even cultivate dilatoriness—call it "deliberation." They think that wisdom is always behind time. Some questions are difficult to decide. But there is no need of putting off a decision in a simple matter. No doubt some fools are precipitate, "go off half-cocked." But some fools are also distressingly deliberate, and some wise men as quick as a wink. At any rate, I admire Matthew's "speed," and I have no doubt that this characteristic played a great part in his future success. He never regretted that he made up his mind in a hurry.

Just as soon as he decided that the call was reasonable he formed the purpose to obey. Here is where so many of us fail. We see the course to pursue, the right thing to do, but lack resolution, hesitate to decide. Other considerations arise. Matthew probably thought of his business, of his fellow publicans, and of the scorn of the Jewish people. But he probably had an assistant, a clerk, or a subordinate, and he left all with him and followed. When he had formed the intention, he solved the business problem! "Look after my affairs and attend to the business! I am off!" And off he went! As to what others would say about his following Christ he cared nothing! What did they have

to do with it? Let them cry or scoff. There was evidently no money in his new venture. But he saw enough in it for his satisfaction. He was a shrewd business man, and he saw compensations somewhere in the future. Friendship with Jesus would mean much. And it would be delightful to hear His teachings every day and to see His wonderful works of mercy. I do not suppose he saw very far or very much, certainly none of the details of his new life. But it must be fine! And it would be all right in the end.

I like Matthew's *immediateness*. As soon as Jesus called him, "he forsook all, and rose up, and followed Him!" Intention followed right on the heels of his judgment, and action immediately followed His intention. He was swift to obey. It takes an age for some people to get in motion. They are good people, see things pretty clearly, and "intend," as they say, to become Christians, but they do not "follow." You can't stir them into action with a hot poker! They do not want to walk, but want to be "carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease." This is not the way. We must "*walk with the Lord.*" We are *going* somewhere! Matthew "rose up and followed Him"! He got in motion in an instant. I imagine he got up close to the Master, did not delay and fall in at the end of the line. He was a modest man. He never made himself conspicuous as a disciple. But he was "busi-

ness," "on the job" right at once, and stayed on it till the end. The writing of his wonderful Gospel indicates that he carried his business qualities into his religion.

There is another thing about Matthew that challenges my admiration: He had *enthusiasm*. That very night, probably, he made a great feast in honor of his new Master, and invited all his publican friends. He wanted to introduce them to Jesus. So far as we know this is the first Christian banquet ever given. It is only in recent years that Christian men have followed Matthew's example. He believed in Christ in a social way. Who has a better right than a Christian to eat a good dinner? We make feasts for rulers and soldiers and politicians and actors and big business men—when we want to inaugurate some big financial enterprise. A lot of money has been wasted in this way, on very unimportant people. But Christians have taken their religion "seriously," almost foolishly. A Christian may well celebrate the day when he left all and followed Christ. The greatest day in his life! And he may well take this means of introducing his Savior to his friends and business associates. Matthew let his friends know that that day was a red-letter day to him! Enthusiasm for Christ! How he enjoyed it! But the scribes and Pharisees were shocked beyond measure. There were Jesus

and His disciples sitting down with publicans and sinners, in a publican's house! "Scandalous"! Yet I cannot help admiring Matthew's enthusiasm. And I do not believe that the scandalized look on the faces of the Pharisees marred in the least his enjoyment of the occasion. He had a good time. All of them had a good time. Matthew was enthusiastic, as host, and all his guests caught his spirit. He celebrated his conversion! What other occasion in a man's life calls more loudly for a celebration? A birthday dinner is not equal to a conversion-day dinner.

Well, was Matthew really converted? I do not think there is any doubt about it. There was nothing miraculous in it. He did not "relate his experience"; indeed, he was not required to do so. But he evidently had an experience. Probably he could not have described it. It came so suddenly! Christ called him, and he left all and followed him. It happened in a few moments. He did think, of course, but he thought quickly and acted immediately. He did just what the Master asked him to do. Did Christ think that this was enough? I suppose so. And is this enough *now*? I think so. The call seemed reasonable to Matthew, and even urgent. He had little time to think about it, but he believed that he ought to follow. We know nothing of his "feelings," but of course he had

feelings, emotion, and judgment, and decision. He acted! The call really moved him, and this is the main thing, and the essential thing in conversion. Conversion means *turning*.

We have made Christian experience too complicated. For many years the Christian world, nearly the whole of it, believed in a formal salvation—baptism was the saving act. This is unreasonable and unscriptural. Every one must act for himself. An outward rite cannot change the soul. After the Reformation and after printing was invented, people began to read the Bible for themselves. Paul's experience became the model. It was miraculous. Christians overlooked the simple conversion of the other apostles, Matthew's for example, and insisted on the miraculous elements in conversion. So, in the recollection of many of us, a simple conversion was doubted. The more miraculous the better. A child was not invited to join the church on a child's experience. Let him wait! On this account many Christian people never joined the church, doubted their experience because it was so simple. Let us get away from this idea. An experience of grace may be simple and still be genuine. A child's conversion is just as genuine as a man's.

Get at the main thing: Faith enough to act—to follow Christ. Moral quality lies in the intention. The intention to do good is virtuous,

though it may be mistaken. The spiritual quality also lies in the intention that acts. Christ called Matthew, and Matthew purposed to follow Him, and did follow Him. Christ was satisfied, and so was Matthew. No mistake was made. Matthew was a genuine disciple. His future experience proved that his initial experience was genuine; he became a useful and great follower. All must start in a simple way. No one can know very much about Christ and the Christian life, to start with. Make a beginning, move, follow Christ! New experiences come as we go on. Real disciples, pupils, grow in grace and knowledge.

Christ is no longer here in person. We cannot look into His face and hear His voice. Does He still call men, and, if so, how does He do it? The real call is to the soul! It was so when He was here among men. Many that saw and heard Him did not hear the call. They saw and did not see, and heard and did not hear. We really see and hear with the soul. When the door of the soul is shut and bolted, the call cannot be heard. Christ calls us away from sin to righteousness, from selfishness to usefulness, from hate to love, from the worldly life to the heavenly life! He calls us to follow Him, and to have His spirit and to live His life. And to this call every open soul responds. Have you not desired to be as humble, and gentle, and kind, and

pure, and unselfish, and courageous as Christ? And would you not like to live the kind of life He lived, comforting the sorrowful, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, defending the weak, rebuking oppressors, forgiving sinful men and women and encouraging them to live holy lives. What a wonderful spirit! What a wonderful life!

Do not tell me that you never heard the call to follow Him. You hear it now! It is a "still small voice." But it is mightier than storm and earthquake and fire! It has moved the souls of men to most heroic deeds of love. It has transformed the earthly into the heavenly, and the human into the divine. But you must heed the call. Do as Matthew did. "He forsook all, and rose up and followed Him."

XIII

“IS NOT THIS THE CARPENTER?”

“**W**HO is he?” This usually means, “Who’s son is he? What position has he? What is his business? How much money has he?” Human greatness is reckoned by a sort of “sliding scale.” It ranges from zero to the nth power. A little “degree” tickles one man to death, a small office raises another to the seventh heaven, and some are not satisfied unless they can dominate the world. We see all sorts of “grandees” strutting across the stage of action and disappearing into oblivion, “unhonored and unsung.” Men, small and great, come and go forever. They unlearn some things and learn a few things. But they have not yet learned how to answer this question correctly: “*Who is he?*”

After His wonderful sermons by the lakeside, and His remarkable deeds east of Galilee, it came into the heart of Jesus to visit again His home town, Nazareth, and do something for His old neighbors. We can imagine how His tender heart yearned to be of service to His own townsmen. The scenes of childhood days and the faces of other years came up before Him as He

entered the old town on the hill. He knew that reports of His gracious and marvellous deeds had drifted into Nazareth and naturally He expected a warm welcome. The willingness and power to bless His neighbors filled Him and thrilled Him. But instead of a warm welcome He received a very cold reception! “And He could there do no mighty work, save that He laid His hand on a few sick folk, and healed them.”

What was the matter? They did not know Him! They had been familiar with Him from His early childhood, were acquainted with His mother and brothers and sisters, and had seen Him in the shop and going about the streets attending to His business as a carpenter. But those reports of His wise sayings and wonderful deeds? How could they be true? He had no “standing” in the community. He was neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet! His people are “unimportant,” to say the least. There was nothing remarkable about Him as a child, so far as they knew, and all the years of His manhood He has been nothing but a carpenter,—a good, honest, workman, of course, but just one of the mechanics of the town. Where did He get such wisdom? He never went to school! (—never sat for years at the feet of a stupid old rabbi.) And where did He get the power to still the tempest and cast out demons and heal the sick

and raise the dead? Incontrovertible, yet incredible! They could not deny what they had heard, but they would not believe it, because they did not *know* Him.

How can we explain their failure to understand their own fellow-citizen? Well, the Nazarenes had a bad reputation, and they had to live up to it! Nathanael said, "How can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" "Jesus said unto them, a prophet is not without honor, save in his own country and in his own house,"—an old and very true proverb. The homefolks are slow to believe. Even the family of Jesus did not understand Him. The Nazarenes were near-sighted, and stupid, and mean, and probably envious. They certainly did not have that virtue we call "civic pride." If it had not been for Jesus the name of their little, old, mean town would not be on the map today.

The Nazarenes had some foolish notions, as most of us have. Their standard of judgment was low and crooked. Jesus had nothing behind him, so far as they knew. Probably they knew that He was of the family of David, but so far removed that it did not count. His royal blood was too diluted. None of His immediate ancestors had any standing. His reputed father, Joseph, was a carpenter, poor and uninteresting, and Jesus, the eldest son, took his place and "ran the shop," till He set up as a prophet

and wonder-worker. There was no “blue blood” in His veins, and His claims to the messiahship seemed utterly visionary, indeed ridiculous. Why encourage the young fellow in His absurd aspirations? It would be much better and more sensible for Him to return to the shop and go to work!

“Then, look at His family! They would make a poor showing in a royal palace. Of course they are good, honest people. His mother is a *good* woman, and His brothers and sisters are reputable people. But there are a hundred families in our town that ‘outshine’ them! As ‘a representative family’ they could not get one vote in the town! If we are going to have a place in ‘the messianic kingdom’ we want to have a voice in the matter. We are not going to have this young upstart and His family dragging us into disreputable notoriety. When the other towns in Galilee and Judea look into ‘the social standing’ of this man and his family, they will laugh us to scorn. We must guard our reputation!” Alas! they did not know that they already had a bad reputation and were really perpetuating it for all time to come by rejecting their greatest Citizen, the greatest Citizen of the world!

But this was their greatest stumbling block: Jesus was “the carpenter.” How could a mechanic take off his apron, walk out of his shop,

and go to talking like a prophet and working miracles greater than those wrought by Moses? Yes, they heard Him in the synagogue. It was indeed wonderful! But how could He do it? The scribes, most learned men, could not do it that way. And there was no doubt about His miracles. The testimony was indisputable! But how could *He* do it? He was nothing but a carpenter—had been a carpenter all his life, right there, before their eyes! They were first “astonished” and then “they were offended in Him”—stumbled over Him. This was His second visit since He started on His “wild career.” The first time He came they showed Him in a decided way that they did not believe in Him—“cast Him forth out of the city and led Him to the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might throw Him down headlong!” No doubt about their animosity then. He waited about a year, teaching and working and blessing many people in the towns of Galilee, and gave His townsmen another chance. But they could not get over the fact that He was “the carpenter.” “And He marvelled because of their unbelief.” And so do we.

Notice this: None of their objections was valid. The mother of Jesus was really the greatest woman of her time, and at no time since has there risen a greater. She would have

graced any position in life. And the brothers and sisters of our Lord were good people. James and Jude afterward became great disciples of our Lord, and wrote two wonderful epistles, James and Jude. And what if He were a carpenter? The calling is not the man. But the calling was a good one, and very useful. They could not charge Him with poor work. He was a good workman, for His day. And He was honest and truthful. He never slighted a job, nor overcharged for His work, nor made promises that He did not keep. His record was spotless. What if He was “the carpenter”? Is the door of progress shut in the face of the mechanic? The Jews believed that every boy should learn a trade. Paul was a tentmaker. But the trade was merely an avocation, something to fall back on, or for recreation. The trouble with Jesus was this, carpentry was His vocation, He made His living by it—*had to work* at it! Doubtless it was this fact that made Him offensive to the proud Nazarenes.

This false standard of judging men has persisted until this day. When I was a student in Germany my landlady said to me one day: “A fine, elegant *gentleman* called today to engage board with us.” I asked her how she knew that he was an elegant gentleman and she replied: “His finger nails were long. This proves that he does not have to work for a living!” As a

matter of fact the fellow was a worthless "son of a gun," living off the labor of other people. Jesus was a useful Citizen. The school of labor is a noble institution. Doing useful work and doing it well and making an honest living and helping His family most certainly prepared Him for His saving ministry. He has dignified and glorified labor. His life in a humble home, His struggles with poverty, and His weary hours at the carpenter's bench, trying to support His dear mother and younger brothers and sisters put Him in sympathy with the toiling millions. They may take Him for their Savior and rest assured that He *knows*. Let no carpenter, no mechanic, or honest worker of any kind, ever despise his job, but with Christ's example before him let every one put his strength and brains and conscience into his work and exalt his calling.

No good man or woman now finds any objection to the early career of our Lord. We are glad that His mother was a good woman and poor, and that He grew up in a poor home and helped to support the family, and that He worked at the carpenter's bench. Soon the whole Christian world will celebrate the day of His birth, and not one of His followers will have a cold shudder because He was cradled in a manger. We rejoice that He rose from the manger to the very throne of God. It is glori-

ous. The man is more than the calling. All honest labor is honorable and ennobling. Our greatest men and women began life in a humble way. Not one of them is ashamed of his humble parentage or his years of honest toil. In this war the trenches have revealed the splendor of real manhood. Some men entered the trenches as mechanics and bank clerks and rose to the command of regiments and brigades. Look at the origin of the great men of the times—Joffre, Foch, Haig, Lloyd George, Geddes, Diaz, Wilson, Pershing, and many others just as worthy. All these men have risen to eminence by good, honest work, and they glory in “the Carpenter,” the same Person who was rejected by the Nazarenes. What would those blind, stupid people say now, if they could come back to earth? They would be more “astonished” than ever, but I hope they would not be “offended in Him.”

“Is not this the Carpenter?” Yes, why not? What has His trade to do with Him? Let us judge Him justly. What did He *know*? Much more than any and all of His contemporaries! Much more than all the learned men of this time and of all times! He knew all the good things, all the things that saved men and women and make for character and ensure happiness. How did He learn them? No matter how or when. Hear Him and be “astonished,” but do not

“stumble” over Him. “Never man spake like this man.” The best and the wisest people hang on His words, delight in His teachings, and believe that His wisdom came down from above.

What did He *do*? We are now more insistent than ever on ability. We do not care much for “degrees,” caps and gowns. A title is a vain thing. And we do not care much about a man’s ancestors—are glad if he has good ones. It is not “who was your father?” but “who are you?” What your father did may have been good and great. But can you do anything well? Many men started in this war in high places. But they could not do what was required of them, and had to get out. We meant business. We could not sacrifice men and money to keep incompetent men in a job. The business is urgent. If one man cannot do it, we will find some one else that can do it. Ability! Jesus could do things, good things, great things, vital things. He appealed to His works. “Believe the works!” “Never mind about me! Quit your quest of ‘origins.’ Don’t stop to solve riddles. Pedigrees are trash. My works speak for me. They at least are true and secure.” “The Carpenter” did things.

And how did He *live*? If a man really lives right, he cannot be bad. The daily life is the test. Is the man a good man in the sense that he does good? Talking well, and even working

miracles, will not suffice. The tree is really known by its fruit. Why did not the Nazarenes think of this? Why did they not go into His past life—see how He treated His mother and brothers and sisters? The home life of a man is a sure test. Why did they not find some poor work He had done, or remind Him of some dishonest deed, or “profiteering”? Why did they not recall some of His “escapades,” or remind Him of some unkind and impatient word, or neglect of duty? They did not know anything wrong in His conduct. It was above reproach. He challenged His enemies to convict Him of sin. They did not have the hardihood to start one lie about His moral character. Even the mouths of the gossips were stopped tight! His life is the complete and everlasting vindication of His messiahship. “Is not this the carpenter?” Yes, *and* the Son of God! If He were to come back to earth, He would not be ashamed to put on His apron again and work at the carpenter’s bench. He is a real man. He is ready to do any necessary work, just as He washed the disciples’ feet, knowing that He came from God and was about to return to God. “The Carpenter” has shown us how to be men, and how to judge men. William Jewell men, “if you know these things, blessed are ye if ye *do* them!”

XIV

“FOR MAN”

CHRIST OR PROCRUSTES?

JESUS and His disciples were making a Sabbath day's journey through the grain fields. The disciples were hungry. As they went along they plucked heads of wheat and rubbed out the grains and ate them. The Mosaic Law specially permitted them to do this. But the Pharisees, Christ's ever-present critics, protested that the act was unlawful. Through their tradition they had made it unlawful, on the Sabbath day. They did not scruple to add to or take from the Word of God. Whatever changes *they* made were binding on the people but not on themselves—for they always left a loop-hole through which they could escape. The charge made against them by our Savior was just: “They bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with their fingers.”

Our Lord did not expose their trickery. He referred them to an instance recorded in their history. David and his men were hungry, and went into the house of God and begged for

bread. The priest had no bread except the shew bread, “which it is not lawful to eat save for the priests.” But because the men were hungry he gave them the shew bread and they ate it. This was against the letter of the law, but according to the spirit of it. The law was honored in the breach! It would have been inhuman and ungodly, and hence unlawful, to send those men away hungry. He wanted the Pharisees to see the principle that underlies the divine law. All of God’s commands are given in love, for the good of man, and not for a galling yoke.

Then Christ uttered these memorable words, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.” The Pharisees had exactly reversed the order. It was their fixed opinion that God first ordained the Sabbath, and then proceeded to fit man into it. Man’s interest, his needs, his comforts, his pleasure, his difficulties, were not to be considered for a moment. At all times and in all circumstances man must adapt himself to God’s commands. No exceptions could be allowed—except when it pleased them to make exceptions for themselves! Relentless religious disciplinarians, as a rule, make a way of escape for themselves but close and bolt the door against others.

Love dictated the divine laws, and love should move men to obey them. The letter kills, but the spirit makes alive. God wants us to see His

spirit behind and underneath His commandments. He is our Father, and we are His children. We should live our worldly lives as members of the household of God. The child should realize that all the appointments and regulations of the home are for his benefit, made with thoughtful care for him and with loving interest in his welfare. And the parental love that made the good home for him should inspire him to subordinate himself to all the requirements. A misunderstanding of the spirit of his parents may lead him into indifference, and then into open rebellion. It is very important that we should understand why God commands us to do this or that. It will be best for us. We should obey Him "as dear children," because He is our loving heavenly Father. Slavish fear cannot render proper obedience, and antipathy will lead to open rebellion. Only loving obedience to His commands will satisfy our loving heavenly Father.

Many well-meaning people, real but mistaken Christians, have been afraid to base obedience on love. They fear that God's authority may be overthrown—license may take the place of law. But all such fears are unfounded. There is nothing so authoritative as love. It is most exacting. Our Lord knew this when He said, "If ye love me, ye *will* keep my commandments." He is not afraid to entrust His com-

mandments to those that love Him. Love is quick to respond. It does not make exceptions. It rejoices to obey. Knowing that we love Him, He makes this appeal to our loyalty, “If ye love me, keep my commandments.” Evidently He believes in the authority of love. And we may venture further. He does not desire our slavish obedience. We are not slaves. We are free-men—made free by Him. Patriotism is love of home and country and liberty, not devotion to a tyrant ruler. In the end the tyrant always goes down and his rule dissolves. Lately we have seen the most ruthless autocratic government go down before the irresistible blows of free-men. ‘At the call of liberty our soldiers crossed the wide and stormy ocean, exposed to the submarine monsters, and helped to set the world free. There is a brilliant parallel to this heroic expedition. Our beloved Captain gave this command, nearly nineteen hundred years ago, to His loving disciples, “Go ye into all the world and tell the good news to the whole creation.” From that day to this the missionaries have crossed ocean and mountain and desert, in an endless stream, to carry out this commission, to obey this loving command—all because they loved Him who first loved them! The gospel is the “liberty message”—freedom, spiritual and political. Behold the price we have paid for the political freedom of the nations. Their libera-

tion from the tyranny of sin and vice is of vastly greater importance, and love will accomplish this spiritual liberation!

Back yonder in the hoary days of myth there was a tyrant, named Procrustes. It was his business to lie in wait for unwary travelers. In his castle he had an iron bedstead upon which he laid everyone that fell into his hands. If one was too short, he stretched him to fit the bedstead; and if another was too long, he lopped off his legs to the proper length. There must be a perfect fit! The bedstead was iron, made exactly the right length, and could not be altered. Of course it was unpleasant to be stretched, and even more painful to have one's legs lopped off. But what else could be done? A perfect fit was imperative. Evidently Procrustes did not make that iron bedstead for the traveler, but had the insane notion that the traveler must be made to fit the bedstead. He did not care "for man." He was a bloody monster. I suppose the myth was invented as a protest against merciless authority.

The Pharisees had a procrustean idea of religious authority. They were forever torturing their contemporaries, stretching some and lopping off the legs of others. Poor people! They could not remember all the little rules laid down by their teachers, or do half they could remember. They were in despair. And if they judged

God by the men speaking in His name, they must have regarded Him as a monstrous tyrant. Procrustes has been in business a long time, and is “still at the old stand.” I suppose the tyrannical cast of mind will always be with us. Some men will always think more of rules than of people—everlasting formalists! We have them in law and medicine and politics and religion—in everything, indeed. Recently we have heard a great deal of “iron and blood.” “Military orders” in France and Belgium have surpassed the mythical iron bedstead. The Kaiser has laid Procrustes in the shade! “Toe the mark—the hundred little marks, made for the comfort and safety of German soldiers, or you will be shot! No exceptions! No appeal!” I imagine the dear God could not stand the bloody business any longer—this utter disregard of the bodies and souls of men and women and children. And often the name of God was on the lips of these tyrants—“With God” was on the belt of every soldier while he was breaking every law of God and man! Why this monstrous anomaly? Why have most horrible crimes been committed in the name of the merciful God?

Procrustes has been here a long time, but he will be put out of business and his shop will be shut up forever. That terrible iron bedstead will be broken into small bits and thrown upon

the scrap-heap of the ages. Jesus Christ is coming to the front! He is "for man" against all comers. He challenges all the bitter and offensive formalists, and commands them to cease misrepresenting God and putting their galling iron yokes on the necks of men. Listen! "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest! Take my yoke upon you and learn of me." *I will will not put it on you. You must take it on yourself.* You have the right to choose. I love you, and I do not want you to wear my yoke unless you love me. I assure you, however, that "my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." And if you will take it upon yourself and learn of me, "you shall find rest unto your souls." Do you not catch the tone? Tender and yet defiant! Tenderness for the laboring and heavy-laden, defiance for their cruel oppressors. With a majestic stride He steps in between the burdened slaves and their cruel drivers and proclaims emancipation. God is "for man"! "I am 'for man'! All of God's commandments were made for the good of man, not for a yoke of bondage. You have formed heavy burdens and laid them upon the shoulders of men, and have refused to lighten the burdens with one finger! God's purpose was to make men free, but you have put them in bondage. He wants men to regard Him as a loving Father, but you represent Him as a heartless ty-

rant! He wants men to love Him, but you have taught them to hate Him. Away with you! Away with your iron-clad rules and your merciless traditions! Give men a chance to look into the face of their loving heavenly Father! Love is God's rule, in dealing with men, and love shall be man's rule, in obeying the commandments of God.”

Jesus Christ is the champion of man. He summons us to His side, to engage with Him in the struggle for the enlightenment and liberation of mankind. What are you “for”? Are you “for man”? God places man above all creation, the first and dearest object of His loving care. “For man” was in His mind when He made the world. He knew that man would need food, so He made the soil to respond to his toil and produce food in abundance. He knew that man would need a house to shelter him from cold and storm, so He made an abundance of building material. He knew that man would need coal and iron, so He stored them in the earth for him. Everywhere we turn we see these words written on all, “For man”! And He knew that man would fall into sin, and become selfish and blind, and pierce himself through with many sorrows, so He gave him His word, and sent His prophets to show him the way, and finally sent His own well-beloved Son to save him, to redeem him from sin and death. What a pro-

gram He arranged for the redemption of mankind! And what a colossal task our Savior has, to carry out this program! Are you going to help to do it? Or will you live for yourself? I know that you are not against man. But I want you to be "*for man.*" I want you to understand God and man—the love that God has for man and the blessed duty of man to love God. I want you to realize that there is nothing else on earth so important, so great, so worthy of your greatest effort, as man. When God sends an angel to the earth it is for the purpose of helping some man, or woman, or child. When He came down to Eden it was to visit Adam and Eve. It is man that makes this earth an important sphere. Do not despise any man. Do not show contempt for "the image of God"! But you must be "*for man,*" with all your might, with brain and hand and heart. Live "*for man*"; toil "*for man*"; sacrifice "*for man,*" suffer "*for man,*" die "*for man*"! Resist everything that harms man. Stand up for everything that is good for man.

An old captain barely recovered from his wounds, was on his way back to the battle line in the Argonne, when he met a fellow captain, and said, "I began to pray the other day; I had not prayed since I was fifteen years old. But while in the hospital I got to thinking about my poor men in that awful battle, and I began to

pray for them. Now I pray all the time, God bless and keep my boys!” Dear old hero! He learned to look at his men the way God looks at all men, and that brought him to God. Whenever you are “*for man*” you are *with* God!

XV

“WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?”

THIS is a pertinent question, just as appropriate now as it was when Jesus put it to His contemporaries. It is even more pertinent now. Jesus Christ is the colossal, supreme, overpowering figure of the last two thousand years of history. His influence is more potent today than that of all other men put together. And He is marching on! Slowly and irresistibly He is invading all lands and influencing all departments of life—political, economic, social, religious. If He is wrong, all the world should combine and suppress Him; and if He is right, why delay His approaching supremacy? College men, who are trying to acquire knowledge and endeavoring to understand human life, surely ought to form some opinion of this remarkable person. You will be the leaders of the people. You cannot go far without coming up squarely against the teaching and influence of Jesus Christ. Then you will be compelled to express an opinion of Him. And woe to you if you have no opinion at all, or a half-baked, second-hand opinion that has cost you no thought, no effort! You must think

about Him until you have a conviction, and can tell what you think of Him! I am not insisting on a certain kind of opinion but on your having a definite one, the result of your own thinking.

It will be interesting to review the opinions of Christ's contemporaries. They had the privilege of seeing Him and hearing His teachings, for about three years. Some of them were of course indifferent. Many people have no interest in anything except their own affairs. Unless they can get profit or pleasure out of a movement, they ignore it. The opinion of such people is worth nothing.

Others of His contemporaries took a superficial interest in Him, especially admired His wonderful works. The picture-show crowd! When the excitement died down, the show was over, they did not know where to go next and relapsed into their normal state of boredom. Such people never *think*. Their minds are not geared for it. “Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish!”

But there were others that took an active interest in His teachings and works. At the very first they crowded around Him to hear and see all. And they did not like Him. He had not attended one of their schools, and He was a carpenter, and His family were ordinary poor folks. He was also entirely too bold to suit them. They were the teachers and rulers of the

people, and, as they imagined, the guardians of religion,—traditionalists of the purest type. When Jesus calmly, and with authority, assailed their teachings as false and unscriptural, they burned with indignation. With all their might they tried to counteract His teaching and influence. But they made no headway. Indeed they came out bad in every encounter. Then they hated Him. They considered Him a dangerous heretic and thought it was their duty to put Him out of the way—and finally did put Him to death in the most ignominious manner. We know what *they* thought of Christ.

But there were others, mostly humble, untutored minds, and women and children, who believed Him to be the Messiah, the Son of God, the King of Israel. At first they were bewildered. Their view of Him was somewhat hazy. And the bitter opposition of their teachers and rulers added to their confusion. But they lingered near Him. They saw that His works were good, and His teachings were very simple and evidently true. Being common folks they heard Him gladly. Surely never man spoke like this man! And a great many became beneficiaries of Jesus. He was kind to them. Sinful men and women found Him sympathetic. Little children loved Him. Many diseased people, hopeless incurables, felt His healing touch and came back to a full and joyous life. Gradually their

thoughts of Him crystallized into an opinion, a clear and firm *conviction*, that He was indeed the promised Messiah, the son of God. Neither ridicule nor persecution nor death could shake their devotion to Him.

This contemporaneous opinion concerning Christ is not conclusive, one way or the other, but it is very suggestive. It reveals very clearly the character of His opponents and that of His friends. His contemporaries revealed *themselves*, at any rate. In deciding the character of a man we must examine those that give him a bad name, and ask why they do not like Him; and we must examine His friends, and ask why they do like Him. As it was in Christ's day, is now and always will be, the egotistical, and the bigoted, and the hypocritical, and the selfish, and the wicked are against Him; and the poor, and the needy, and the humble, and the unselfish, and the righteous are for Him. Undoubtedly this cleavage confronts us today. But we must do our own *thinking*. We must form an opinion for ourselves, irrespective of the good or bad opinion of others.

Let us ask again, What did Jesus think of Himself? Of course one's opinion of oneself may not be conclusive. But if an accused person wants to testify for himself, the court permits him to do so. An egotist usually sees himself in bright colors. And a wicked man, in por-

traying himself, will avoid *black* as much as possible. Again, nearly every good man underestimates himself. But, after all, a wise and good man can put a pretty fair value on himself. He can at least tell you what his mission is and why he believes that he is able to do his work. So many people questioned the character and mission and authority and ability of Jesus that He was often compelled to defend Himself. And He was so often put to the test that He was forced to show what He could do and what He thought of Himself.

Remember, there was a long history behind Christ. He was not a meteoric person, suddenly flashing from a cloudless midnight sky, to go out in darkness forever. For over a thousand years men, inspired men, had spoken and written about Him. Prophets had foretold His coming. They had pretty clearly described His character and works and sufferings. His lineage was known. Even the place of His birth was foretold—"the Son of David," born in Bethlehem. Many good, inspired men had endeavored to *name* Him. This was difficult. Words failed them. But they tried, and mustered all the glorious attributes their minds could invent. "Wonderful"; "Councillor"; "Mighty God"; "Everlasting Father"; "Prince of Peace"; "King of Israel"; "Son of God"; "the Messiah"; "Immanuel"—God

with us—“Redeemer”; “Savior”; Moses, it seems, could not think of an appropriate name and spoke of Him as “a prophet. . . . like unto me.” He quietly accepted these titles, but did not insist on one of them. They were a beautiful and pathetic endeavor to set forth His character and mission. He was the *person* indicated, and He *knew* He was. That wonderful history, with its full meaning, was clear to Him. Calmly and humbly He accepted Himself as the person foretold, and felt that He had the authority and ability, from the Father, to do all that the prophets had predicted. It is amazing how His words and works justified His fitness for His great office!

As I said, He acknowledged these titles, but did not seem to care particularly for them. He gave Himself a new name, and that He seemed to love because He used it so often. “The Son of man!” In the four Gospels you will find that He used this name, as a rule, in speaking of Himself. It became rooted in the minds of the apostles. Whenever they reported His speeches concerning Himself they used this chosen designation. So it has come down to us, and is destined to go on down to all succeeding generations. We hear Him saying, “Who do men say that I the Son of man am?” Do not think for a moment that in using this name he disclaimed all divine attributes—He persistently attached

them to his lowly name. "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit on the throne of glory." "The Son of man" is a glorious title!

Why did Christ give himself this name? I do not claim that I can answer this question beyond a doubt. But I suggest two reasons that seem probable. First, He so thought of Himself—He regarded Himself as one of us. One of the human family! He was a Jew, Son of David, Son of Israel. But He was also more than a Jew. The Jews looked for a Jewish Messiah, a Savior of Israel. This was not His idea of Himself, so He gave Himself a name that was more than racial or national. Indeed He was "the glory of Israel," but also "the light of the Gentiles." He had a world-wide mission. He was indeed "the Son of God," but He also loved to think of Himself as one of us. He "counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross." "The Son of man" was congenial to His gracious feeling for us. He gladly humbled Himself down to our human level, that He might exalt us to

His divine level. The name He chose should be a great comfort to our hearts.

Again, He probably chose this name as a rebuke to the narrowness of the Jews, and to our narrowness too. Exclusiveness killed the Jews—and is still killing them! They were not “the Lord’s anointed” in the sense they supposed, neither are we. We are just people, human beings, and we have no exclusive rights in Jesus Christ. “The elect” does not mean that we are better than other folks. Christ died for all, and therefore He came to be the Savior of all. Abraham was chosen, that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed. When God chose him He had all other men in mind. “Special privileges”! If we have them, we have also special responsibilities that should make us very humble. If Christ called Himself “*the* Son of man,” it should be enough for you or me to be called “*a* son of man.” He will not be monopolized by any man, nor by any class of men. Exclusive Christianity is antagonistic to His spirit. He attended the banquet given by Simon, the Pharisee, and also the one given by Matthew, and reclined with publicans and sinners. The conceited guest that attended the king’s marriage feast, without a wedding garment, was bound “hand and foot and cast out into the outer darkness.” Why did he not come as the other people came, “according to the

rules of the game"? He had no right to expect "special privileges." "The Son of man" is the brother of every man, no less and no more. This is glory enough for all of us.

I might pause here, if I had time, to inquire, What does the modern world think of Christ? Suffice it to say that "His name is above every name." He has a larger place in the literature of every civilized nation than any other person. The four Gospels that contain an account of His words and works have been translated into more languages and are read by more people than any other book in the world. He is loved by more people,—and they are the best and most intelligent and most useful,—than any other man on earth. And He has more influence in the affairs of mankind than all the other men in the world combined, scientists, philosophers, statesmen, philanthropists, counselors, kings. So great is He that no man, no matter how wise and great he is, ever thinks of claiming to be His equal. And His influence is spreading every day, penetrating all lands, and His spirit is carrying new ideals into all kinds of human activities. He will have more influence in the present Peace Conference than He ever had before in any national or international assembly. The members may not mention His name, but they will think His thoughts concerning the weak and helpless, concerning the women and

children, concerning the human family, *the people*, whom He had in mind when He called Himself “the Son of man.” That famous Golden Rule of His is about to be internationalized. “All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them.” It does not require the vision of a prophet to see His coming triumph. He is irresistible. “The Son of man” is marching on!

But let us come now to the important part of this question, What do *you* think of Christ? As a college man you cannot afford to ignore Him. You should have an opinion, and you should be able to give good reasons for it. People will ask you what you think. And whether they ask you or not they will expect you to have clear and decided views of this greatest person. You should decide the question while you are in college. Take some of the Bible courses. Study especially the four Gospels—not simply because they are good “literature,” but because they contain the words and works of Christ. And *think* as you go along—think for *yourself*. Your teachers are not running a punch-and-judy show, pulling a string to make you dance their way. They do not believe in the funnel process of education—pouring their views down your throat. They themselves have a definite opinion of Jesus Christ; they believe in Him as the Son of man and the Son of God. But they

want you to study and to think, and to come to an opinion of your own. They know that a ready-made opinion, a "hand-me-down," will do you no good. You must think for yourself. Christ asks you to; He expects you to. And you can. An opinion arrived at through your own thinking and investigation will honor Him and be of service to you—it will be a *conviction*.

It is important that you should answer this question right, and as soon as possible. The answer will greatly influence your life. If you get the wrong view of Him, you will live for yourself, for your own profit and pleasure. But if you see Him as He really is, catch His spirit, you will feel called to serve rather than to be served. This is Christ's great contribution to mankind—a new and clean heart and a holy and unselfish purpose. He *turns* those that believe in Him. In reading the Gospels you will be struck with His transforming power—how He changed the purposes and lives of those that believed in Him. The fishermen quit their boats and nets, the publican left the tax collector's office, the sinful woman gave up her shameful trade, and the ruthless persecutor ceased to imprison and kill. Old things passed away forever, for them, and all things became new.

If you conclude, after an honest and thorough investigation, that He is an unimportant person, or that His claims are false, you will not be

any worse off. He cannot influence you if you do not believe in Him. You will be just where you were before. But the investigation will be to your credit. You will have reasons, valid in your own sight, at any rate, for ignoring the brightest Star that ever appeared in the horizon of history. And, in addition, you will find out that His teachings rightly understood and practiced have not and cannot hurt anyone.

The opinion of others, pro or con, may help you to some extent. But they are not of vital importance. The theologian, the philosopher, the state, the church, not one of them, not all of them, can answer this question for you. Then how shall you go about it? Study the Gospels. Practically all that we know about Him is recorded there. It is not silly stuff, and it is not too deep for you. It is really very simple, and superficial. You can read as you run. Some imagine that religious truth must be cryptic, hidden, mystical—beyond the sight of ordinary mortals. Jesus Christ lived a simple, every-day life, open to all, and used the plain speech of the people. Wayfaring men though fools need not err in seeking knowledge of Him. Several years ago I had it in mind to make a more thorough study of Shakespeare, and wrote to a great Shakespeare scholar to recommend some of the best books on the subject. He answered, “Study the works of Shakespeare. These are

all that the scholars have. You have good sense and know how to think. Get your knowledge first-hand." So I say to you: "Study the Gospels. Do not be content with second-hand knowledge. All the data necessary, and all that the theologians have, are found in the Gospels." This is not a philosophical or theological problem. Remember the question, *What do you think of Christ?* Keep this in mind as you search. Who is Christ? Who do you say He is? Form a definite opinion of Him. Knowing and following Him is genuine Christianity.

I cannot predict exactly what your opinion will be, nor how nor when you will arrive at it. I am willing to leave it with you—and with Him. Probably you will not get along just as you expect to. A new road presents many surprises to the traveler. The lover has his mind made up about his "proposal" to his sweetheart, but he rarely makes it as he planned. You may solve this problem in an instant, or you may be a long time making up your mind. In the Gospel narrative we find many instructive experiences. Nathanael was prejudiced against Jesus, but he did not talk with Him five minutes till he exclaimed, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God! Thou art King of Israel!" Philip was wise in refusing to argue with Nathanael; he simply said, "Come and see!" Nathanael came and saw, and made up his mind at once.

The man born blind gives us another and different experience. He remained, in a measure, ignorant of Christ for several days after his eyes had been opened by the Master. The Pharisees examined him and took pains to discredit the Healer. But the man fearlessly defended Him, with the little knowledge he had: “He opened mine eyes,” “since the world began such a thing was never heard,” “God does not hear sinners.” A noble and unanswerable defence! The Pharisees cast him out of the synagogue—turned him out of church—because he resented their dictation, would not accept their opinion of Christ. Sometime after this Christ found him and asked, “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” The man answered, “Who is He, Lord, that I may believe on Him?” Now he comes into the full light. “Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that speaketh with thee.” “And he worshipped Him.” You may soon decide what you think of Him, or you may travel a long, rough, circuitous road before you reach the goal.

Historians tell us that gathering information about a people is not the only thing necessary to an understanding of that people: We must also put ourselves in their place; by imagination, live with them, do as they did, speak as they spoke, think as they thought, and feel as they felt. I advise you, as you read the gospel

story, to spend a few days and nights with "the Son of man." As the proverb goes, we never know a man till we live with him. We have read a great deal about our own General Pershing. He was born and brought up not far from here. We know his life. We are familiar with his looks, as portrayed in his picture. But a few days and nights with him at General Headquarters in France, especially during the great battles, would be a revelation to us. Imagine how intensely he thought, and how eagerly he watched the map as the telephone messages came in, and how he thought about his boys and their mothers, and how he prayed—all great men pray as they carry great responsibilities! I have tried in my imagination, to go over the top with my own dear boys, to face the machine guns, to fight amid roaring cannons and bursting shells, and to pick up and carry the dear wounded fellows back to the dressing station. Imagination, of course, is feeble, but it helps. It will help you to walk the roads of Galilee with the Son of man, to sit down among the people and hear one of His sermons, to see Him heal the leper and restore sight to the blind, and raise the widow's son, to watch His sympathetic face as He forgives and encourages the broken, wayward woman, to see his flashing eye as He refutes and confounds the arrogant and hypocritical scribes, to see Him with a group of

mothers about Him and their little children sitting on His knees, and to go with Him at night into the lonely mountain and hear that pleading voice of His as He prays for strength to do His Father's will. And as you go along with Him try to imitate Him—do the things over, after Him. But you say, “I cannot? He worked miracles!” Yes, He had to do his work in a hurry. There was no time for the slow, normal process. And He wanted to show us that great good things can be done. If we have the will and try, we shall get the power. Faith as a grain of mustard seed moves God to work wonders. You cannot speak the word and heal the sick, but you can help the physician and nurse the sick and support hospitals. You cannot restore sight to the blind, but you can lead them. You cannot pardon sin, but you can sympathize with the sinful and tell them of a Savior's pardoning love. You cannot feed the five thousand with a few loaves of bread, but you can feed a few hungry people with the loaves you have. You cannot raise the dead, but you can comfort the hearts of those that bury their dear ones. Oh! you can do, in a small way, nearly all His good deeds, if you have the heart and will try. You will never understand Him until you imitate Him. And if you have as big a heart as He had you will get more power—you will almost

perform miracles. At any rate, you will understand why He performed them.

Men have always wished to see God in human form. If He were to appear among us, what sort of man would He be? What kind of life would He live? What kind of works would He do? What would He say? How would He treat the people? Some of the prophets predicted that God would come in the flesh. They felt that He must become man, to lead men out of ignorance and sin. There was no other hope for the race! And they foretold His coming, and gave Him the name "Immanuel"—God with us. If God were a man He would certainly say the things that Christ said, and do the things that Christ did. What else could He say? What else could He do? Imagine if you can! If you travel the road with Him very long, you will be convinced that He is really "God with us." You will know that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth." Philip said to Him one day, after he had walked with Him about three years, "Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Think about him one day, or four years if necessary. And before you leave the Old Hill come into my

office and tell me what you think of Him. You may pass through many dark seasons of doubt. Much depends on temperament. But think sympathetically and honestly and hard. I am sure that you will say to me, “He is the Son of God,” “the chiefest among ten thousand”—“He is altogether lovely!”

PROPERTY OF

L.A. BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

THE MASTER'S COLLEGE

252 G833h

MAIN

Greene, John Priest/The happy man : and



3 3540 00002 7662